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# A SHORT HISTORY OF INDIA

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES ,  
TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

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AUTHOR OF

HISTORY OF ARYAN RACE IN INDIA    A HANDBOOK OF INDIAN ART  
IDEALS OF INDIAN ART    ETC

WITH SPECIAL MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

INDIAN history is often written for the purpose of propaganda—pro British or pro Indian. It should rather be studied by every one as one of the greatest chapters in the history of the world. The present short history is written primarily for the Indian and English student, but it is not intentionally a dry text book. It may therefore be interesting for many other readers of history.

The first chapter is necessarily tentative though it has a solid objective foundation in economic and geographical data given in early Vedic literature. Geography is the foundation of all history. Modern maps of India however, fail to distinguish the geographical facts which dominated the whole of ancient Indian history and are still uppermost in the minds of all orthodox Hindus or the vast majority of Indians. Special maps have, therefore, been prepared for this history which not only make these essential facts clear at a glance but help the reader to understand the symbolic geography of the Puranas. Without this knowledge it is impossible to fully understand the symbolism of Indian art and religion.

This history was planned and partly finished before the appearance of Mr H G Wells *Outline of History*. Though in some respects it takes a different point of view it may serve to fill up a hiatus in that comprehensive work for Mr Wells has hardly given sufficient attention to the very important place which India has filled in world history.

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## PART I

# THE FIRST ĀRYANISATION OF INDIA

## CHAPTER I

### THE ĀRYAN WAY

MODERN historical research, which gives such a vivid picture of the dawn of history in the valleys of the Nile and Euphrates, has not yet clearly identified the vestiges of the earlier life of the people calling themselves Āryans and speaking a language in which English and Sanskrit have common roots, who appeared on the highlands of Persia and Mesopotamia about 3000 B C—the people who gave to Persia the Avesta and to India the Vedas. But enough is known to justify the assumption that after a prolonged period of primitive pastoral life in the open grass lands, where they achieved an immense advantage in hunting and warfare by taming the horse<sup>1</sup> they acquired considerable experience of woodcraft in the park lands skirting the forests of Western Asia. There they may have developed their primitive system of agriculture and cattle farming. So when at last a great drought or other reasons compelled them to penetrate the dense forest belt in order to reach the grass lands of the high plateau of Irān, or Āriāna, there was a method and organisation in their proceedings unknown to their forefathers in the plains, though in their

<sup>1</sup> The horse was known in Babylonia as the ass of the East.

reverence for the cow and in their patriarchal social system,<sup>1</sup> they kept up the tradition of primitive pastoral folk.

They were expert woodsmen and their chieftains no longer lived in tents of skin but in wooden huts tied together by strings, so that they could be easily dismantled and removed whenever the tribe trekked from place to place. The Aryan ox wagon and fighting horse car must have excited as much astonishment and awe among the wild tribes of the forests of Western Asia as modern vehicles do in the virgin forests of Central Africa. The wheel was for the Aryan the symbol of law, order and progress. It marked out the "Aryan way". On the open treeless steppes on the sandy deserts and even in the park lands skirting the forests a pastoral people do not trouble themselves with road making, for there camels, horses or cattle instinctively find the line of least resistance and tread out a track which man can easily follow. But when the dense forest has to be traversed by wheeled vehicles and its open spaces brought under systematic cultivation for fodder crops, a regular system of road planning becomes a necessity for both man and beast. These Aryan pioneers of civilisation quickly discovered this, and the experience gained by them in the exploitation of the mountain forests formed the basis of their ritual and laid the foundation of their social and political laws. "Turn to the East," said they, "when you cut a tree"<sup>2</sup> [it was to let the morning sun into the clearing for their crops]. "Cut the tree low so that the stump does not obstruct the carts," was another injunction. "Smear the stump with ghee" the wondering savages thought this was only for appeasing the offended spirit of the tree. But though many half formed speculations were the groundwork of the Aryan woodman's religion, he knew that the effect of the unction was to preserve the life of the tree. "Ghee being seed, he thus

<sup>1</sup> The name *Ārya* means 'kinsman' connoting a man of noble family.

<sup>2</sup> *Sathapatha Brahmana*, III 6 4. Cp. Genesis II. 8, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden."

endows the tree with that seed, and from that seed in the stump trees are afterwards produced " "Grow out of this, O Lord of the forest, with a hundred shoots," they prayed They were good and careful foresters, these old Āryans

For practical reasons also, the scouts of the tribe, hunters and fighting men armed with bow and arrows, the latter being sometimes poisoned because the desert parts of Western Asia were then infested with lions, kept along the high but comparatively level ridges generally covered with pines, cypresses and cedars, which were to them sacred trees<sup>1</sup> Here there was good grazing for their cattle,<sup>2</sup> less cover for wild beasts, and the absence of undergrowth made road-cutting easy These trees also provided the best fuel and logs for huts or for helping the cart traffic There was another good reason for the choice of this line of route—it was the safest as well as the most practical Down in the valleys where the larger rivers ran there were more formidable foes than the savages who roamed the mountain forests, people of the Semitic and other races who had learnt the arts of war as practised in the great cities of Egypt and Babylonia Along the high ridges the Āryan scouts could locate the forest openings suitable for the next encampment, or plan a raid upon the inhabitants of the fertile valley below And though they generally found good drinking water on the high levels where springs bubbled up from the ground, so that wells or cattle ponds could easily be dug, they took full advantage of their strategic position on the heights, and gradually pushed their way down to the great rivers on either side of the mountain ridges until they possessed the whole of the watershed with its grass and plough lands, forest produce and minerals—all they needed for a permanent settlement Thus the rivers generally formed the boundaries of the Āryan territory, called Āryāvarta, though sometimes,

<sup>1</sup> The Himalayan pine was called Deva dharu, the tree of the Devas

<sup>2</sup> In modern Europe the Alpine larch birch and fir forests are still used as natural grazing grounds for cattle

as in Kashmir and Rājgrha a circle of hills enclosing a fertile plateau formed the Āryan cow pen<sup>1</sup>. The margin of a dense forest might also serve as one of its boundaries.

In after times this ancient Āryan highroad running approximately east and west along the pine clad mountain ridges and by the banks of rivers was known as the Raja patha the royal road or king's highway. In the first great Āryan Empire in the world's history that of Darius I of Persia it ran for about 2000 miles from Susa in Western Persia to Sardis and the shores of the Mediterranean. For the Āryan leaders worshipping Ushas the Dawn Maiden who drove away the forest gloom did not drift like the pastoral nomad of the steppes. They steered their way deliberately through the forest depths as the mariner steers his ship at sea. The altars they set up to the Fire spirit and other forces of Nature of which they were keen observers were scientifically oriented so that they pointed out the auspicious way. The smoke of the sacrificial fires upon the high ridges was the banner seen from afar which proclaimed an Āryan outpost.

Compelled by the environment of their semi nomadic life the Āryans came to be expert road and bridge makers thinking out the Āryan way instead of following blindly in the track of their flocks and herds. Thus their gods were supermen riding on the animals appropriate to them—not like the old Egyptian deities monstrous birds and beasts ruling the destiny of man. Trained always in a school of self reliance to be engineers of their own destiny the Āryans were psychologically confirmed optimists. Living under the healthiest conditions in the pure mountain air with abundant food both animal and vegetable skilful hunters and mighty warriors sound in body and alert in mind they felt keenly the joy of life. They had no fear of man and the terror of the powers of evil which clogs the spiritual progress of many primitive peoples did not enter into their souls. For they were convinced that the Devas the

<sup>1</sup> Gir vraja the ancient name of Rājgrha which was the first capital of Magadha means Cow pen of hills.

Shining Ones of the sky and air, of the mountain and of the forest, who were their friends, were more than a match for devils

From the lore of the forest they became great medicine men. They knew also the magic power of song. The Devas both sang and danced, and it was through song that they were brought down from their heavenly thrones to take part in the sacrificial feast and in the daily life of Āryāvarta. The Rishis, the Āryan poets, were the high priests who composed the sacrificial hymns, but the merry men of Āryāvarta sang also when they went to war,<sup>1</sup> when they drove their bullocks along the furrow, when they felled the forest trees, built their log huts and fashioned their carts, implements and weapons. The Dasyus, their savage enemies, lighted no fires and sang no songs, their worship was only sorcery and black magic, which put men into the power of evil spirits.

It is easy to understand why fire played so important a part in the early Āryan worship. Living in comparatively temperate climates and at high altitudes, fire was more a necessity for them than it was for the dwellers in the southern plains. Agni, the Fire spirit, manifested as Surya, the Heavenly Torch, showed the Āryan chieftains the path through the dark pine woods and trackless jungle. Born on earth among the forest trees, he and his brother Indra, the Thunderer, aided by Vāyu, the Wind, lighted the sacrificial fires, helped the farmer to make a clearing for cultivation, provided a most valuable fertiliser in the form of ashes and destroyed insects and vermin, which were his worst enemies. Agni in the homestead provided warmth, purified the daily meals and kept away sickness. "He bringeth prosperity to the house of the worshipper" (*Rig-Ved* 1: 73: 1). The only aspect of Agni which the Āryan woodsmen dreaded was when in stormy weather their skill was of no avail for controlling the forest fires. For then assuming his terrible aspect, that of Rudra, the Roarer, Agni would rush

<sup>1</sup> "With song will we conquer the men who sing no hymns" (*Rig-Ved* x 105: 8)

like a fiery serpent through the mountain gorges sometimes overwhelming the Aryan settlement and taking both cattle and human victims in the awful sacrifice. Then they prayed to him, O Rudra accomplisher of sacrifices the serpent like destroyer of heroes may thy cow killing and man slaying weapon be averted! (*Rig Ved* i 114). But even then the purifying effect of the forest fires was recognised for Rudra was worshipped as the Divine Healer.

The practice of offering victims in voluntary sacrifices for the purpose of averting the wrath of heaven may have originated in the dire disasters caused by these forest fires. The offended Devas required the best that their worshippers could offer—the first born son the fine horse valuable bull or other forms of wealth. Even the wood used for the sacrificial fire or as the posts to which the victims were bound was of the trees most valued for their economic uses or of others, like the Palisa tree (*Butea frondosa* which in full bloom seems like a fire upon the horizon) because they suggested themselves as symbols of divine power. To avoid needless bloodshed and reckless waste it was therefore necessary that the sacrifices should be regulated by those who were considered the wisest and best men of the community, those who by their songs could move the hearts of the Devas and intercede effectually for their fellow tribesmen. It was also their duty to preserve the right tradition of sacrifice and teach it for the benefit of future generations.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of purity and with it the idea of caste, also grew

<sup>1</sup> A remarkable parallel to Vedic social conditions was to be found in pagan Russia many centuries later. A whole series of villages was built all tending towards the same centre in which dwelt the elder generation entrusted with the care of the altar. The old term *ognishitche* (altar) from the word *ogon* (fire) gave its name to the primitive patriarchal aristocracy or *ognishitchamé*. This aristocracy, living on the sacrifices offered by the members of the tribe had soon no need to carry on their own economy thus arose differentiation of the economic and religious functions the fusion of them with the military command having been the most ancient type of political power (*Modern Russia* by Gregor Alexinsky p 33).

up as a part of the Aryan tradition by reason of its natural environment. To keep off enemies who might divert or spoil his water supply or inundate his crops it was the Aryan warrior's pious duty to patrol the banks of rivers which watered his fields and pastures right up to their mountain sources. And up there in the Devas' haunts the elements of life are purest: the air which forms the breath of life and the water



FIG. 1.—Himalayan Snow peaks (Panch chul) and Forest clad Ridges  
(From a photograph taken by Davidson's telephoto apparatus)

of the mountain lake or of Brahma's crystal fountain pouring from under His Lotus throne. There too the Āryan woodman worshipped the pure element of Fire drinking in the sublime beauty of the sunrise when the Creator's Jewel crested the Himalayan snow peaks and filled the trellised windows of the pine groves with His glory.

The famous mantram OM *Mane Palme hum* OM *The Jewel is in the Lotus* may have been the Āryan mystic's

greeting to the sun as it touched the inner petals of the World Lotus<sup>1</sup>

Cleanliness to the Āryans was godliness. The Devas who lived on those wondrous virgin heights would not tolerate uncleanliness in the food and drink offered to them. Those whose occupation or habits were dirty were necessarily debarred from active participation in sacrificial rites while those who fouled the pure streams which flowed from the Devas' thrones or polluted the sacrificial ground were not allowed within the Āryan pale. A clean white dress was necessary for the sacrificers; a white horse, bull or elephant was especially pleasing to the Devas.

All these conditions while helping to promote unity of thought and the development of a healthy, vigorous race tended to put great power into the hands of the priesthood, but they did not prejudice the social position of the skilled craftsmen who took a leading part in the life of the community. The carpenter, especially, as the craftsman directly connected with the fire sacrifice, held a very high position in the Āryan hierarchy and *Twāshtri* or *Vīśvakarman*, the carpenter of the Devas, helped with his axe to build earth and heaven. The Āryans also observed the golden rule that the hand of a craftsman engaged in his craft is always pure. (*Vanu* III 163)

The places where the Āryan tribes were then living have not yet been explored by the modern scientist for archaeological research has been almost entirely confined to the cities of the plains. But it is hardly likely that an exact chronological basis like that which has been found for the history of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria will ever be established for the early Āryan period when according to the *Ramayana* all Āryans were Brahmans and there were no rigid distinctions

<sup>1</sup> *Jayfur* p. 14. At the present day the Lamas of Tibet and Sikkim recite this mantram at sunset time to keep off the evil spirits of night as they circumambulate the house according to the Vedic rite *pradakshina*.



of caste Āryan civilisation at the beginning was strictly a cult of the mountain forest the temples were the forest groves, the palaces were of the wood in which the Fire spirit dwelt, and probably, like the ships of the Norsemen they often served as a funeral pyre for the chieftains. So the maternal record of that remote civilisation has been obliterated by the forest which gave it birth or, where the forest itself has been destroyed by sacrilegious hands Sūrya Mitrā and Indra Rudra, Vayu and the Maruts<sup>1</sup> have taken into their keeping the worldly relics of their worshippers. But Professor Jouveau Dubreuil's

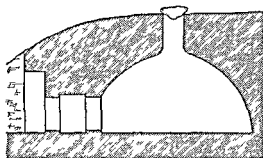


FIG. 2 —Rock cut Funeral Chamber in Malabar

(From Jouveau Dubreuil's *Vedic Antiquities*)

recent discovery in Malabar of Āryan rock cut stupas or relic chambers where he believes the Vedic funeral rites were performed may be the beginning of a new chapter in archaeological research.

In the Vedas the inspired books of India and the most ancient of Āryan literature, the spirit of this fine culture still survives. The hymns which the Āryans chanted in those forest groves which the villagers sang when they drove their well laden carts back from the forest at eventide, or when they crushed the millet and barley for their oblations to the gods, are still chanted in the temples of India probably in the same tone and rhythm as they were chanted in the forests of

<sup>1</sup> The storm winds.

Āryavarta in that remote and as yet uncharted past. The philosophical teachings enshrined in the Vēdas have continued to influence deeply the religious thought of the world. The traditions of the Āryan forest craftsmen are still dominant in the living traditions of Indian art.

## CHAPTER II

THE MESOPOTAMIAN AND PERSIAN ĀRYAVARTAS—THE LAND OF THE LOTUS AND THE SYMBOLIC GEOGRAPHY OF THE PURANAS—PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EARLY INDO-ĀRYAN STATE

THIS ancient forest cult has naturally left no full and continuous record of its gradual development, such as that of the inhabitants of the great river valleys where the art of pottery originated. In the upland forest potter's clay is not easily found. Until the Āryans made permanent settlements in the plains, the low caste potter had no place in the community. The forest dweller feeds off a platter of leaves, as the high caste Hindu does to this day. A dried gourd suffices for his drinking cup, other water vessels are of wood or leather—metal vessels only appear when civilisation is far advanced. The damp soil of the forest does not preserve the record of man's thoughts like the dry sands of the desert. Carvings in wood and scratchings on birch bark—the forest substitutes for papyrus or parchment—rot quickly away. The Eastern Āryans have left no burial grounds: the funeral pyre consumed the bodies of their dead, and until Buddhist times they built no permanent memorials for them. It is not until they came into contact with Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian civilisation that the first written record of them has come to light, and then they are already military and intellectual leaders of subject races.

On the other hand these early Āryan forest dwellers took such an extraordinary care in preserving the oral tradition of

their gradual religious and intellectual progress that a singularly full and exact record of it has survived in their sacred literature, and even after many centuries of city life the ideals of the Āryan forest settlement permeate the thoughts of Hinduism from the Himālayas to the farthest south of India.

Archaeological researches now enable the historian to place the first fixed point in Āryan chronology in the early part of the second millennium before Christ, when the Bronze or Copper Age was beginning to pass into the Iron Age, and the Āryans, having conquered the highland forests, were descending into the great river valleys. About 1746 B.C., after Babylon had been stormed and sacked by the Hittites from Anatolia, an Āryan chief named Gandash swooped down from the mountains to the east of the city and founded a dynasty which lasted for six centuries. As little is known of the personal history of these Āryan kings of Babylon as of most Indo-Āryan kings, except that they worshipped the Devas of Vedic India—Surya, Indra, Varuna and others—and had conquered the people of Elam whose capital was Susa.

It is clear that by that time the Āryan community included many different racial elements which either voluntarily or by conquest had adopted Āryan leadership and teaching. About 1400 B.C. other Āryan chieftains had found their Himalayas in North-west Mesopotamia, on the Taurus mountain range, and their Āryāvarta between the rivers which flow from its eastern slopes.

Chiefly through the discovery in 1887, at Tell el Amarna in Egypt, of a wonderful collection of clay tablets, part of which proved to be letters written by the king of this Āryāvarta, Dushratta (Dasa ratha)—a name famous in Indian history—it has been possible to draw up a chronological table of his dynasty. The letters date from about 1377 B.C., and were chiefly addressed to his brother-in-law, Amenhetep III of Egypt, and to the latter's son and successor, Amenhetep IV. Dushratta's sister, Gilukhipa, and afterwards his daughter, Tadukhipa, took a subordinate place in the Egyptian king's

harem, but had much influence over Amenhetep IV, who took Tadukhpa into his own harem after his father's death. These matrimonial alliances between the kings of Egypt and of Mitāni, as this Āryāvarta was called, were apparently not the first, for there is reason to suppose that the father of Amenhetep III, the famous Thothmes IV, married a princess of Mitāni. Another proof that these Āryan chieftains, whose chronology has been traced back to about 1445 B.C., were then very powerful in Northern Mesopotamia is shown by the fact that Dushratta for a time dominated Assyria. Indian historical tradition embodied in the Purānas is silent regarding these Āryan migrations. According to the Vendidad, which contains the mythological history of Irān, the first Āryāvarta was the country lying between the sources of the Oxus and Jaxartes. But archaeological research seems to show that in the second millennium B.C. there was a continuous current of Vedic or Early Āryan religious thought running from the Himālayas to the mountains of Asia Minor and spreading over the Mesopotamia of Babylonia. The influence which the Āryan princesses exercised over the minds of the great priest-kings of Egypt led up to one of the most interesting episodes in Egyptian history—the attempt made by Amenhetep IV<sup>1</sup> to establish a state religion inspired by Vedic idealism in the place of the glorified totemism with its monstrous animal Devas which had created the Egyptian pantheon<sup>2</sup>. When it is remembered that women in Vedic India were not seldom venerated as Rishis, the poets or high priests of the Devas, it is not surprising to find a counterpart of the Vedic cult of Agni-Sūrya established at the Egyptian court at this time by the influence of the princesses of Mitāni.

On philological grounds it has been supposed that the Indo-Āryans came first from Bactria over the passes of the Hindu Kush into S. Afghanistan and thence by the valleys of the

<sup>1</sup> Amenhetep, according to a custom afterwards prevailing in Āryan India, changed his name to Akhenaten, 'Pleasing to the Sun disk.'

<sup>2</sup> See *Ancient History of the Near East*, by H. R. Hall, p. 300.

Kabul, Kurram and Gumal rivers into the Punjab<sup>1</sup> In the Vishnu Purāṇa the country through which the Indus flows is called Ketu māla or the land of the chiefs and is likened to a boar (the Boar Avatar of Vishnu) It was in the moun-



FIG. 3.—Vishnu in the Boar Avatar raising the World from a Flood

tain forests of this region, or among the 'bristles of the Boar, that the Munis or Yogis sought refuge when the world,

<sup>1</sup> Mr F. F. Pargiter in his *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* propounds a new theory—based on his reading of the Puranas—that the Aryans entered India by the mid Himalayas and after penetrating as far south as Allahabad spread northwards into the Punjab and thence into Iran.

oppressed by the weight of the mountains sink down into the waters of a flood

Probably long before the time of Dushratta of Mitāni Āryan tribes were gradually spreading themselves over the plains of North western India. The description of the Himālayan regions given in the Puranas sums up broadly the physical characteristics of the country though there is some confusion and obscurity perhaps due to corruption of the original text,

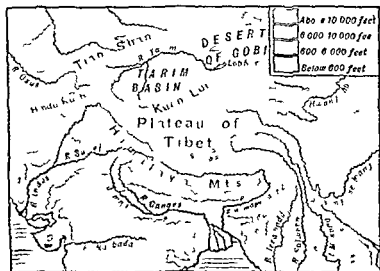


FIG. 4—Orographical Map of Northern India and Central Asia.

which has not been preserved with the scrupulous care bestowed upon the ritualistic part of the Vedas. The map p. 17, and the diagram Fig. 4 give the orographical facts which may be compared with the symbolic geography of the Puranas. In the Vishnu Purana the stupendous mountain complex of Northern India, Tibet and the adjacent countries is described as the centre of the "Lotus of the world." Six groups of mountain ranges (or whorls of petals) are said to run east and west, their water sheds being named as separate countries. Two other ranges running north and south

enclose these groups on the east and west. Between the innermost ranges Brahmā, the Creator, is said to have his throne, "like the seed vessel of a lotus" on his mystic mountain Meru. From the holy city of Brahmā the seven rivers of Bhārata varsha (India) flow towards the south, the number corresponding with the Seven Powers or Mothers of Creation. Another mighty river on the eastern side of the city flows "over the tops of the inferior mountains and runs into the sea through the country of Bhadrāshwa. On the opposite side another river traverses all the western mountains and passing through the country of Kētumāla falls into the sea, while another, after watering the country of the Uttara Kurus, 'empties itself into the northern Ocean.' India, or Bhārata varsha, and three other countries extend from the mountain boundaries of Meru "like the petals of the Lotus of the world" <sup>1</sup>

Comparing this symbolic description with the actual facts illustrated in the map and diagram, it is easy to identify the "seed vessel" of the mystic lotus of Brahmā with the region of Mt. Kailāsa and India's most sacred lake Mānasarovara—the highest in the world—which forms the centre of the whole river system of Northern India and thus was worshipped as the mystic reservoir of the Lord of life. The seven rivers named in the Vedas, the Ganges, Jumna, Sarasvatī, Sutlaj, Parushnī, Marud vridha and Vipacā or Biās, flow from this region into the plains of Āryāvarta. From the eastern side of the lake the Brahmāputra "Brahmā's son," issues and after running many hundred miles in the same direction turns south, 'passes over the tops of the inferior mountains,' then turns west to join the Ganges and flow with it into the Bay of Bengal. The northern river watering Uttara Kuru may be meant for the Yarkand darya. The description of the western river applies equally well to the Indus and the Oxus.

The symbolism is obviously not scientific geography or geometry, but it condenses into a beautiful simile the central

<sup>1</sup> *Ishnu Purana*, Wilson's Trans. pp. 166-73

facts of Himālayan hydrography. It was meant to convey the idea that Brahmā's heavenly city with its four great rivers of purity was planned cross wise as an Āryan town or village was planned<sup>1</sup>. And by understanding the symbolism one can follow better the Āryan way where it leads into the higher regions of abstract thought: there all physical phenomena are resolved into the exact scientific concepts of Hindu metaphysics.

In the geography of the Purānas, which gives the key to the symbolism of Indian art, the "great Brahmā lotus flower," with its four main petals radiating north, south, east and west, was a symbol for the continent of Asia. The southern petal was India, or Bhārata varsha, the northern one being called Uttarakuru, or the land of the trans Himālayan Kurus. The Kurus of India were the antagonists of the Pāṇḍavas in the great struggle of the *Mahābhārata*. Their close connection with the Kurus of this trans Himālayan region suggests one of the routes of the Āryan immigrations into India. The main stream perhaps came through the western land gates of India, the Bolān, Khyber and Bannu passes, along the highways which afterwards formed the caravan trading routes between India and Asia Minor. Nine of these routes went through Afghanistan and Beluchistan. The northern route of the Kurus probably went through Gilgit and the Malakand.

The symbolism of Indian art, in which the lotus appears so conspicuously, will be dealt with in another chapter. But it will be interesting to compare the symbolic geographical teaching of the Purānas with the actual facts. Upon the map of Vedic India, p. 17, the outer turned down "petals" of the great "Brahmā lotus" formed by the mountain slopes and rivers of Northern India, together with some of the inner whorls of upturned "petals"—or the snow clad peaks which were the lotus thrones of the Devas—and the 'seed vessel' at Lake Mānasarovara are indicated. In Vedic times the outer "petals" formed miniature Āryāvartas,

<sup>1</sup> See *History of Aryan Rule in India*, by the Author, p. 26.





Map of India in later Vedic times, or the North Indian section of the "World Lotus"

peopled by separate Indo Āryan tribes or confederations of tribes. There were two main groups of these settlements—the one comprising the basin of the Indus and its tributaries, the other the basin of the Ganges. Jumna, Brahmaputra and their tributaries. The Indus group represents the earliest period of the Āryan invasion, the Ganges group the later one. Between the two lies Kurukshetra, the battlefield of the *Mahābhārata*. The Puranic method of popularising geographical knowledge is worth further study<sup>1</sup> it might even be used with advantage in modern teaching. The land of Bhadrāśwa in the Vishnu Purana is likened to a horse's head, Bharata to a tortoise, Kuru to a fish. The resemblance of India (Bhārata) to a tortoise is clear enough though the Tibetan simile of a sheep's shoulder blade is more precise. A fish is a good simile for the Mesopotamia or Doab of the Jumna and Ganges, where the Indo Āryan Kurus were found in Vedic times. The Matsyas, or people of the Fish were one of the Vedic tribes of the original settlement probably driven out by the Kurus.

The physical characteristics of an early Indo Āryan state as shown on the map are first the mountainous region rich in minerals containing the never failing reservoir of pure water where pious men communed with the Devas, next a stretch of grass land and plough land forming the granary of the state. The principal city was generally built, for strategic as well as for economic reasons, at the confluence of the two chief rivers bounding the settlement, for the rivers served both as protective boundaries and as ways of communication with the Āryan mountain base, and in later times with the sea. These physical characteristics were typical not only of the early Āryan tribal settlements in Northern India, but of the later kingdoms formed in the Deccan and Southern India when Āryan culture gradually found its way along the mountain ridges of the Vindhya forests and the Western Ghāts, the holy mountains of the Deccan and Southern India.

<sup>1</sup> A similar symbolic method is used in the *Sūpa sastras* to teach image makers artistic anatomy.

## CHAPTER III

ĀRYANS AND NON-ĀRYANS IN THE *RIG VEDA*<sup>1</sup>

INDIA, though mainly populated by primitive people in the neolithic stage of culture, was not wholly an uncivilised country when some of the Āryan tribes, separating from the Irānians and pushing farther east reached the western spurs of the " Abode of Snow " (Himālaya) and began to follow the mighty rivers which flowed from it into the plains of India. Brahmanical legends refer to the strong and wealthy cities on or near the banks of the Indus of which the Āryans took possession after a hard struggle, for their adversaries were well armed, possessed horses and chariots, and built castles of stone. Several of the places afterwards celebrated in Indian history, such as Takshasīlā, Mathura and Ujjain, were said to have been founded by these non Āryan people, who were probably of Dravidian race and perhaps connected with the ancient Sumerians the people of Southern Babylonia, whose history has been traced back to the fourth millennium B C. These Dravidians, called by the Āryans Asuras Dātyas, Dasyus or Nagas were mostly a maritime and trading people. In the *Mahabhārata* they are described as great magicians, they worshipped the sun and the serpent, like the people of ancient Media with whom perhaps, they had trade connections. The amalgamation, either through military conquest or by peaceful penetration of Āryan and non Āryan cultures gradually transformed the simple tribal organisation of Vedic society into powerful political states and finally made the ocean, instead of the river, the boundary of Āryāvarta.

The oldest document of Indo Āryan history, the *Rig Veda*,

<sup>1</sup> The chronology of the Vedic period is very uncertain, but the period of the first Āryan settlements in India may be dated approximately between 2000 and 1500 B C.

considered apart from the ritualistic purpose to which it was dedicated gives a striking impression of the Aryan temperament and of the people who after having laid the foundations of modern Hinduism became the deified heroes of the vast majority of the non Aryan people of India. The Vedic Aryans were a martial energetic people tall and of fair complexion fond of hunting and chariot racing music and dancing and often given to alcoholic drinking and gambling yet with a well ordered mode of life and high moral ideals. There are no allusions to royal palaces great temples or large accumulations of wealth. On the other hand there is little trace of the asceticism which became so conspicuous in later Indian religious thought. The prayers of the *Rig Veda* were mostly for victory in war for offspring and increase of cattle and horses. The Vedic bards vented their sarcasm upon the patrons who were niggardly in rewarding their efforts to please the Devas. The Devas themselves who were credited with very human feelings demanded equal liberality from their worshippers in the bestowal of sacrificial gifts.

The hymn to Aranyani the Forest Spirit sung when the creaking ox wagons came home in the evening laden with forest produce is a charming idyll of an Indo Aryan village settlement.

Aranyani Aranyani ere you vanish from our sight will you not to the forest? You are not afraid?

When the bull bellows the ciccila (bird) replies dancing to his cymbals Aranyani then rejoices.

In the fading twilight cattle grazing and cottages loom dimly Aranyani then sends home her creaking carts.

One man calls his cow Another fells a tree a loiterer in the forest fancies he hears a scream.

Though the fierce beasts may kill us Aranyani does no harm. Let us feast on her sweet fruits and rest there at our will.

Praise be to Aranyani<sup>1</sup> Mother of forest beasts! Musk scented fragrant bountiful of food—though no peasants till her soil<sup>2</sup>.

But the *Rig Veda* also alludes to times of scarcity when both Aryan's bounty and the crops of the cultivators failed. The record of this calamity in India thus begins long before the reckless devastation of the forests widened its area and intensified its horrors. We also get glimpses of fierce fights with the Dasvus or Dasas whom the Aryans engaged in of inter tribal wars and raids for cattle and women of hunting the wild boar with trained hounds of shooting and trapping of big game such as the elephant lion and wild bull, of gamblers staking their wealth wives and freedom while supreme importance is attached to sacrificial feasts in which horse flesh beef mutton and goat's flesh were consumed together with draughts of intoxicating liquor *soma* and *sura* <sup>1</sup>

The Vedic Aryans were generally monogamous though their chieftains sometimes had several wives. The Aryan social system was patriarchal and was thus distinguished from the Dravidian which was matriarchal. With one exception that of Ushas the Dawn Maiden loved of the Aryan foresters goddesses played a very subordinate part in Rig Vedic religion. But women were not secluded they could choose their own husbands and the names of some who distinguished themselves in religious discussions or composed sacrificial hymns are mentioned. There is no evidence in the *Rig Veda* of the practice of *sati* it was apparently the duty of a brother or nearest kinsman to take the widow of a dead man to wife.

The *Rig Veda* as a sacerdotal compilation does not enter largely into the economic life of the people. Among the handicrafts carpentry was specialised into various branches—house builders chariot makers bow makers and other occupational groups being distinguished. Carpenters and smiths took a high social position for their services were needed in the sacrificial ritual in which both the warriors horse

<sup>1</sup> Drunkenness however on the part of the sacrificing priests was a sin which had to be atoned for by purificatory rites

chariot and the agriculturist's ox wagon were used. Skill in archery was essential for the Āryan warrior, the arrow being his chief weapon. Gold, copper and silver and *ajās* (which may have been iron) were the principal metals used by the Vedic Āryans.

The economic values of the trees held sacred in Vedic ritual sufficiently explain the religious veneration with which they were regarded—they were as indispensable in Āryan social economy as the cow or horse. The *deodār* (*Deva dharu*) the especial tree of the Devas is one of the most valuable both as timber and as fuel of indigenous trees in the region of the *Rig Veda*.<sup>1</sup> Its fragrant and oily heart wood is so durable that some of the great wooden bridges built of it in Kashmir are believed to be over 500 years old. The *Khadir* tree (*Acacia catechu*) gives good fodder for cattle; its gum is used in medicine for dyeing and cotton printing. Its wood, which is more durable than teak, is used in wheelwrights' work for ploughs, spears and sword handles; it also makes excellent fuel. The many varieties of the fig—India has over a hundred—provide both food and shelter for man and beast. The aromatic fruit of the bael tree gives food and drink and is used for strengthening mortar, especially in the building of wells. Its timber is used for all kinds of agricultural implements and its leaves as cattle fodder.

The Āryans in the earliest times, when the hills or temperate regions were their home, wore garments of skin, wool or linen. Cotton is not mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. The weaver's craft is often used in the hymns as a metaphor for the poet's rhythm. The Rig Vedic Āryan prided himself upon being well dressed; both men and women took great pains with their toilet. Various ways of plaiting and braiding the hair are mentioned and the barber's razor was used. There is nothing in Vedic literature to support the theory that the

<sup>1</sup> It grows on the mountains of Afghanistan and N. Beluchistan and in the N.W. Himalayas between 66° and 80° longitude, rising to a height of 10,000 feet and descending in places to 2,500.

early Aryans in India were barbarians learning civilisation from the people they conquered

The main occupation of the *Is* or the people as distinguished from the priestly bards and the fighting chiefs was cattle and sheep farming and agriculture. Jewellery and pieces of gold might have been used in trade but wealth was generally reckoned in terms of animal stock—cows, horses, sheep and goats. Agriculture was so far developed that the ground was systematically ploughed, manured and irrigated. Cultivated land was measured and distinguished from forest, waste-land or pasture but the tilling of the soil was a subsidiary occupation to cattle, sheep and horse breeding. Trading was a separate occupation and voyages undertaken for gain are alluded to in the *Rig Veda* but the merchant is not so prominent as he became in early Buddhist times.

Of the life of the Indian people in the period when the Aryan tribes were fighting with them for the possession of the soil the *Rig Veda* does not tell much except that they were rich in cattle, horses and chariots, were adorned with gold and jewels and built stone forts. Evidently they were

Then many theories were formulated to explain the origin of all things so that the Aryan people might learn the divine law and live in harmony with it. The *Pur Veda* and the other two collections associated with it, the *Sam Veda* and the book of chants and the *Yajur Veda* the book of sacrificial rites—known as the Three Vedas—sum up orthodox Aryan religious views as they were expounded by the hereditary priestly families about the beginning of the first millennium B.C. There must have been many other views brought forward and unrecorded in the public disputations which took place at the tribal festivals or when the village elders gathered under the assembly tree to listen to wandering scholars who had gained the title of *Rishi* or sage. Besides the Three Vedas which provided the ritual for the great tribal sacrifices, there was a fourth the *Atharva Veda* used mostly in domestic ceremonies to drive away evil spirits and to assist by suggestion and sympathetic magic the medicaments of the physician.

The scholarship of the time when the Vedas were compiled involved though it was in the ever increasing complication of sacrificial ritual was by no means superficial. It was through the efforts of the Vedic schools that Sanskrit grew to be the most scientifically constructed of all Aryan languages. The perfecting of language as a means by which man could attain to the wisdom of the Devas was as important in Vedic society as the accurate finish of the warrior's bow and arrow. Rhythm, grammar<sup>1</sup>, phonetics and logic were part of Vedic studies not wholly confined to the priestly families. Some knowledge of astronomy was necessary for fixing the times of the seasonal tribal sacrifices, the construction of altars involved problems in practical geometry such as making squares equal to two or more given squares or equal to given triangles or rectangles, or finding a circle approximately equal to a given square.

But the fact that the Rishis who composed the earliest hymns were already beginning to be regarded as prophets of a

<sup>1</sup> The oldest known Indian grammar an *Ugri* who is supposed to have lived not later than 300 B.C. mentions sixty-four predecessors.



bygone age, and that the letter rather than the spirit of the prayers was believed to contain the magic power to which even the Devas must bow point to a certain stagnation in the mentality of the priestly class. Many of the appeals of the Vedic poets to the bright spirits of the earth, sky and flood, couched in noble verse, touch a universal note which has not lost its magic potency even for modern ears. And a sublime inspiration cannot be denied to the ancient seers who, finding a common principle of life in air, fire, water, earth, plants and trees in mankind and animals, propounded a theory of creation which seems like an adumbration of the conclusions of modern experimental science. But when the free spirit of inquiry which shines out in the contents of Vedic poetry becomes gradually centred in the idea that the secret of the universe lies in the form of a sacred text (*mantram*), and that a false quantity or wrong intonation could disturb the cosmic order, it is evident that the priestly tradition when the Mantras were compiled had entered on a perilous path, and that a Buddha was needed to lead the Āryan people back to the ancient way of right thinking.

The compilation of the Vedas was, however, the starting-point of a great organised effort continued by many generations of scholars and many different schools of thought to preserve for posterity the accumulated results of Indo Āryan experience after the Āryans had abandoned a pastoral nomadic life and settled down as lords of the soil in India. The distinction between the Āryan and non Āryan then grew less sharp, while social and political conditions became more complicated. The children of Dasyu concubines in the Āryan households, and those of Āryan women captured by Dravidian chieftains, adopted Āryan customs and religious rites, but as the inner mysteries of the Āryan religion could only be interpreted in the Vedic language, which was a foreign one for the lower classes, the influence of the Brahman priesthood over the masses increased as the Indo Āryan community grew larger. So the scope of Vedic compilation was gradually enlarged to embrace

the traditions of political and social economy, craftsmanship, art and science in a co-ordinated religious scheme applicable to all sorts and conditions of people within the Āryan pale—a scheme which contained the Dharma<sup>1</sup>—the Āryan law of right living assumed to be a counterpart of the divine law by which the universe is maintained.

The chief exponent of Āryan ethics, the *muni*, or monk, who devoted his life to disinterested psychological research in the same spirit as the modern scientist, does not appear upon the scene in the Vedic period. But behind the crowd of soma-drinking, sacrificing priests, shouting their songs of war and clamouring for their fees, there were the quiet forest retreats—ideal places of study, where men lived apart from the world and meditated on the problems of life from a different stand

(natural or unpolished) Here also the speculative theories of the Upanishads were shaped into various philosophic systems, and while the sacrificial ritual of the Vedas, set forth in the treatises known as the Brāhmanas, grew into monstrously extravagant forms, the power of the priesthood over the masses was greatly strengthened by an increasing tendency towards hereditary occupations and fixed laws of marriage and ceremonial purity which formed the basis of the Hindu caste system.

In Vedic times caste, as it is now known, hardly existed. HYMN x 90 of the *Rig Veda* describes the four social classes of mankind, Brahmans, Rājanyas, Vaishyas and Sūdras, as being fashioned from the World Spirit's (Purusha's) body, the Brahmans from his mouth, the Rājanya from his arms, the Vaishya from his thighs, and the Sūdra from his feet. But the idea of caste does not enter into this symbolism. It simply implies that God created man out of His own Body, which is the earth—the Sūdras, or men of the plough, from His feet—the low lying country where the heat of the sun is greatest, the Vaishyas, the trading men, from the paths and river ways along which they travelled, the Kshatriyas, who by hunting learnt the art of war, from the upland forests where they hunted, the Brahmans, the thinkers and spiritual teachers, from the high mountains where God Himself taught them His word.

The social distinctions of Vedic times were those of occupation and of colour (*varna*) which implied race, marked also by a difference of dress—white for Brahmans, red for Kshatriyas, yellow for Vaishyas and black for Sūdras. The Āryan ethnical type which had closely intermingled with the non Āryan population before the caste system was fully developed never constituted more than a small fraction even of the population of the north. But the exclusive social customs especially with regard to marriage and diet, practised by the Brahmans of Madhyadesa for the purpose of preserving the Vedic ideal of life, in the course of time permeated the

whole of India, gradually becoming stricter as alien influences supervened and threatened to subvert the religious foundations of Āryāvarta.

The philosophical idea of caste is that there are species of humans just as there are of plants and animals, each with a special mentality and an appointed place in the cosmos determined by *karma*, or the cumulative effect of conduct in past lives<sup>1</sup> upon the present one. The road to spiritual advancement and with it an increase of worldly happiness lies in strict devotion firstly to the special *dharma* of the place in society, whether it be high or low, which one's own *karma* has decreed, and secondly to the *dharma* of mankind in general. But until medieval times the theory did not exclude the possibility of a change of caste taking place in one lifetime. A man might alter his industrial vocation. Either a Brahman or a Sūdra might in special circumstances become a king or warlord. A high caste man might be degraded by breaking his caste rules. But the low-caste man, though he might conduct the religious ritual of his own caste, could never perform the high sacrificial functions of Brahmanhood, because he could not in his lifetime acquire either the knowledge or ceremonial purity of an hereditary calling upon which the prosperity of all Āryāvarta was supposed to depend. Caste laws, theoretically, were laws of spiritual eugenics designed to promote the evolution of a higher race. In practice the factors which are even now adding to the ramifications of caste are differences of race, language, occupation, diet, religious and social customs and breaches of caste rules.

The settlement of Madhvadesa was followed by further migrations eastward along the sub-Himalayan districts and towards the plains of Bengal, where the Indo-Āryan tribes came into contact with people of Mongolian origin who had come down through the Tibetan passes. At the same time

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of rebirth, originating in Vedic times is one of the cardinal beliefs of Hindu religion.

the northern slopes of the Vindhyan Mountains together with the outlying spurs known as the Arīvalli hills and the sites of ancient Dravidian strongholds were occupied, the forest recluses finding congenial retreats in the dense jungles stretching far southward over the Deccan plateau, which for many centuries afterwards formed an impenetrable obstacle for any organised body of invaders. Some adventurous spirits among the Āryan clansmen began to explore the mountain chain known as the Sahyādri or Western Ghāts, which stretches almost uninterruptedly from Gujarāt down to Cape Comorin, and entered into friendly relations with numerous aboriginal tribes which became their devoted allies. Here, also, they gazed for the first time over the wide expanse of ocean, which in after ages served as the highway of adventure and trade for the Āryans of the west, and learnt of the existence of very ancient maritime kingdoms, which had bartered their gold, pearls and forest products with Chaldaea and Babylonia from time immemorial, their vessels keeping up a chain of communication along the coast but not yet venturing on the high seas.

The fair women of Āryan descent were an irresistible attraction for Dravidian chieftains, and racial pride did not prevent Indo Āryan families from giving a daughter in marriage to a dark skinned neighbour for a sufficient consideration, though all Āryāvarta might be roused to fury if an Āryan wife or maiden became a Dravidian warrior's prize in a successful raid. But as Dravidian society was matriarchal such intermarriages with or without consent, always exerted a powerful influence in the Āryanisation of India, for in the course of time all the highest Dravidian families both in the north and south, claimed Āryan descent on their mothers' side and adopted Āryan customs and religion, while the common people worshipped the divine heroes whose magic overcame the demons of disease and seemed so much more powerful than their own. It would seem as if the Āryan tribes of the Punjab, who in later Vedic times held the

principal land gates of India were not so strict as the Brahman<sup>s</sup> of Madhyadesa in maintaining the ancient sacrificial ritual for the latter despised them as being uncouth in speech and sacrificially impure though racially the Punjabis were perhaps more Aryan than themselves. A further cause of tribal jealousy and dissension is supposed to have come from fresh incursions of Aryan tribesmen from the trans Himalayan regions who finding other entrances barred to them climbed the mountains of the Hindu Kush and through Gilgit and Chitral gradually found their way into the Gangetic Valley.

The political and social conditions of this period are vividly illustrated in the two famous epics of India the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Authorities differ widely as to how far the narrative of the two poems may be taken as historical fact. In both cases fact and fiction or allegory are closely interwoven and in the case of the *Mahabharata* the composition of the existing text was spread over many centuries so that as in the compilation of the Vedas there are many different chronological strata contained in it. Some of them may be referred to the tenth century B.C. and others may be later than A.D. 200. For the purpose of this history it is enough to state that these sagas of the Kshatriya bard containing the story of Rama's adventures in the forests of the Deccan and Southern India the great fight for the recovery of his devoted wife Sita from the toils of the King of Lanka and the tradition of a great war in which all Aryavarta was engaged cannot be regarded as pure myth or allegory. The *Ramayana* in its broad outline discloses the history of the Aryan penetration into Southern India. The narrative portion of the *Mahabharata* tells how some trivial dynastic quarrel brought to a head the jealousy of priests and warlords and the long standing contentions of the Indo Aryan tribes. The district where the great fight is said to have taken place, Kurukshetra close to the modern Delhi lies between the territory first occupied by the Aryans in the Indus valley and Madhyadesa the centre of later Brahmanical culture.

It seems ordained by Nature to be the decisive battle ground of India. The religious element which came into the fray was emphasised by the fact that this was part of Brahmā's holy land. The fight between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas with their respective allies was one of a long series in the same neighbourhood dating from unknown antiquity to the eighteenth century A D. The actual battle which the *Mahābhārata* describes must have taken place in Vedic times, but the poem in its present form is a huge compilation of didactic stories and heroic discourses,<sup>1</sup> designed to teach the whole dharma of Hinduism, which cannot be put much earlier than A D 300.

The political conditions disclosed in the two epics are in marked contrast with those of Vedic times, when tribal affairs were discussed and regulated by the Samiti or general assembly and the Sabhā, an elected council of state. Kingship, though still controlled by the assembled clansmen and the dharma, or religious law which safeguarded the rights of the Āryan free-man, was, like the priesthood, tending to be hereditary. Tribal confederacies were developing into powerful states mostly ruled by families selected from the fighting and governing class (Kṣatriyas or Rājanyas). Of these the kingdom of the Pāṇchālas, with its capital at Indraprastha near the modern Delhi, and that of the Kurus, whose capital was at Hastināpura on the Ganges, were the principal combatants in the Great War. The kingdom of Kosala, the modern Oudh, with its capital at Ayodhyā, near Faizābad, was the central point of the story of the *Rāmāyana*. Commerce and civic life were developing fast. Mathurā (Muttra), Kanyākubja (Kanauj), Kāśī (Benares), Ujjain and other great cities of medieval India were already famous. The epic bards who were attached to the royal courts—as were also builders and other craftsmen, painters and musicians—took little notice of the oligarchies and republican states which both in the east and west played

<sup>1</sup> It contains over 100 000 Sanskrit slokas, or verses, divided into eighteen books.

a part in early Āryan polity it was not the business of the court lards to sing their praises but the *Mahabharata* alludes to them incidentally as being strong in war

The same epic also evidences the resistance of the intellectuals among the fighting class to the claims of the Brahmans to be the sole leaders of the people in spiritual affairs for the religious teacher of the Pandavas as well as the controlling mind in the fight is Krishna prince of Dvaraka an Indo Āryan colony on the west coast<sup>1</sup> who in the *Bhagarad Gita* expounds the philosophy of Yoga proclaiming in opposition to the sacrificial theory propounded by Vedic Brahmans the spiritual union of the human and divine through devotion to the duties of life

The *Bhagarad Gita* obviously cannot be taken as the actual words of a Kshatriya propagandist of 3102 B.C. the date ascribed to it by Indian tradition though Krishna may have been one of the great teachers of pre-Buddhist times who prepared the way for the more exact metaphysical ideas subsequently embodied in Hindu sacred literature<sup>2</sup> But even the oldest portions of the *Mahabharata* show a great advance in religious thought from early Vedic times when the Devas were believed to have their thrones on the mountain tops and the Lord of life was the mountain spring personified or the well where the cross roads of an Āryan settlement met The holy spot where the Creator's river crossways met in the centre of the World Lotus was worshipped still as it is to this day But the name given to it in the epics Manasarovara the Lale of the Mind reveals the growing tendency to idealise physical facts and to recognise spiritual powers as controlling the blind mechanism of nature The Āryan pioneers had found the hidden sources of the sacred rivers in the heart of the Himalayas But the Devas they worshipped seemed not to be there Yet

<sup>1</sup> The Kathiawar Peninsula

<sup>2</sup> A crude theory of Yoga was held by some of the Vedic munis Patanjali in the early centuries of the Christian era codified the current Brahmanical teaching on the subject in the Yoga sutras



pious imagination could discern among the fantastic shapes of the peals around Kailas the image of the Great Thinker, meditating on His handiwork. So they idealised the wonderful lake which lay below Kailas as the eternal source of knowledge from which all wisdom flows. And in the sky above across which the Milky Way was flung they placed the celestial Ganges and the Devas' home connected by mystic links with the world below.

Proceeding on strictly logical lines of investigation the best minds of Āryavarta were already discarding the ritualistic formularies of the official priesthood and were looking for a solution of the problems of life in the quest of the ethical law by which Vishnu, the all pervading Spirit, harmonised the conflicting forces of the universe. In the Upanishads the Eternal in which the cosmic ether (ākāśa) is woven and which is interwoven with it is described as without eyes ears voice or mind without heat breath or mouth unaging undying without fear immortal. It is the unseen Seer, the unthought Thinker, the unknown Knower. There is no other hearer, no other thinker no other knower.<sup>1</sup>

### APPROXIMATE CHRONOLOGY

B C

- c 2500 First Aryan invasions of India
- c 1400 Aryan Kings of the Vitam
- c 1500-1000 Earliest hymns of the *Rig Veda*
- c 1000-800 Mantra period and first compilation of the Vedas  
Great war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas  
(*Mahabharata*)
- c 800-600 The later Vedic compilations the Brahmanas Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads.
- c 600-500 Sutra period

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<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* III viii. Macdonell's translation  
*Hist Sansk Lit* p 219

## CHAPTER V

BUDDHISM JAINISM AND THE BHAKTI CULT  
CIRC 600 350 B C

THE preceding period is all important for the understanding of the origins of Indo Āryan civilisation uncertain though it is with regard to dates. It is not until the seventh century B C and the founding of the Saisunaga dynasty (642) that Indian history starts with a definite chronological framework based upon the different dynasties of Northern India. Until the time of Alexander the Great Indian politics have little interest compared with the long struggle for supremacy between the two Āryavartas the Hellenic and the Irānian which ended in the overthrow of Darius III in 330 B C. But the sixth century B C is one of the great landmarks in the history of human thought, for in India it saw the birth of the Buddha (circ 563) and the appearance of Mahavira the leader of Jainism. In Ionia Heracitus the Greek philosopher whose doctrines seem to have been derived from Zoroaster, was born (circ 540) and Pythagoras of Samos (circ 570) who likewise imbibed Eastern ideas either through Egypt or Ionia. Zoroaster, who strove to free the old Vedic religion of Irān from superstition and obscurantism is supposed to have lived about the beginning of this century in Khorasan. On the borders of the mighty mountain complex which gives the waters of life both to India and the Far East Confucius and Lao tse began to rouse the masses of China to a higher conception of the duties of life.

It seems almost as if the heart of the World Lotus where the Vedic sages had their ashrams exhaled a psychic influence penetrating to the four corners of the earth. The ancient land of the Vedas was in this century a province of the greater Āryan empire the world had known and the well trodden paths of trade, conquest and pilgrimage through the land gates

of India were linked together in a continuous line reaching to the shores of the Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>

We have seen how in India the Āryan and Dravidian racial elements had closely intermingled and produced a type of mentality peculiarly Indian. In the upper strata of Indo-Āryan society the Dravidian contributed his fine intuitive faculties to the logical thinking of the Āryan, so that the hocus-pocus of primitive magic had developed into a scientific investigation of metaphysical problems in which the intellectuals of all Āryāvarta were keenly interested. The optimistic outlook of the Āryan, his great organising capacity, high ideals of clean living and reputation as a medicine man of supernatural power had been potent factors in the making of Āryāvarta. But an hereditary priesthood, aspiring to supreme control of the state, had converted the spontaneous outpourings of the spirit of Vedic times into magical formularies, of which they held the key, and created an extravagant and costly ritual by which they pretended not merely to propitiate but to coerce both the gods of the Āryans and the demons of the Dasyus. The sanctity of the forest āshrams had its attraction for many besides the aged and infirm, but as a means of obtaining the spiritual power of Yoga, union with the Eternal, or even for the base purpose of gratifying revenge upon an enemy, the primitive practice of *tapas*, or self mortification was especially popular, since it was open to men of all castes to put the capacity of human endurance to the severest tests in the hopes of winning the desired reward, either in this life or in the next.

It was when these and many devious by paths were being followed by earnest seekers after truth, as well as by wild fanatics with ignoble aims, that Siddhārtha Gautama, a Kshatriya prince of a small state which had its capital at Kapilā vastu, close to the borders of the modern Nepal, was

<sup>1</sup> Darius I also used his fleet to keep up communications between his capital and the Indus valley, from which he drew a heavy tribute of gold and a contingent of Indian archers for his army.

so deeply stirred by the spirit of the times that resigning his hereditary right to succeed his father Suddhodana as Raja<sup>1</sup> and leaving his beloved wife and child he took the pilgrim's staff in hand and joined in the quest for the truth by which the real end and aim of human existence might be known. The poetic legends of the Buddha's early life need not be retold here. The pathos of the story might lead one to believe that it was an unheard-of thing for an Indo-Aryan prince of that time to become so absorbed in the religious problems of the day as to renounce all worldly ambitions and pleasures for the single purpose of acquiring knowledge. But disputations on philosophical and religious subjects were already a recognised intellectual diversion for the Indo-Aryan aristocracy; it was part of the dharma of Siddhartha's rank in society to take at least a formal interest in them. And as there were then no books or writings on the sacred sciences to be learnt by heart the only resource for Siddhartha if dissatisfied with the instruction which the Brahmins of his father's court could give him was to go to the forest ashrams or sit at the feet of hermits famed for piety and learning. By giving an heir to carry on the succession of the royal line he had fulfilled his chief duty as a *grīhastha* or householder. An intellectual Kshatriya thirsting for higher spiritual knowledge might well claim the right of following the traditional Aryan way of learning and become a *bhikṣu* or *sannyāsin* though the social conventions of his warlike clan might be shocked thereby.

It has been supposed that the Sakiyas the clan to which Gautama belonged were of Mongolian or Tibetan blood. There is nothing improbable in supposing that Aryan and Turanian blood had intermingled at the various points near the heart of Asia which were a meeting ground for both races long before the time of Gautama. But it by no means follows that the Rajanyas or ruling families of the clan were non-

<sup>1</sup> The position of the Raja in the Sakyan clan says Professor Rhys Davids was something like that of the Roman consul or Greek archon (Cambridge History of India p. 1).

Āryan by race The sages of Mongolia were at that time moving in the same direction as the great minds of India and of Iran but the traditions of the Sakīyas were Āryan and the Buddha's quest was for the forest path "leading to the understanding of life, its coming to be and its passing away," trodden by the Āryans of old He would penetrate through the tangled growth of superstition and primitive magic to find the habitation where the Enlightened Ones of a former age had taught 'the Āryan truth,' pure and undefiled

Kapila vastu, Gautama's birthplace, was named after a Rishi of Vedic times whose philosophical tenets the Sāṅkhya system, formed the groundwork for early Buddhist teaching But it was not merely to join in current controversies regarding the existence or non existence of a world soul that Gautama, after putting to the test, spiritually and bodily, the theory and practice of many different schools at last came forward to proclaim the origin of suffering and the means of escaping from it—the Āryan Eightfold Path The *Rig Veda*, 'the fountainhead of Āryan wisdom, had taught that the root of all existence, the primal seat of mind and the impulse through which the manifold life of the world came into being was Desire (Kāma) So far Gautama agreed with orthodox Brahmanism But this Vedic truth implied that just as the lotus rooted in the mud of Brahman's holy lake, grew slowly upwards from the depths until its spotless flower blossomed in the light of heaven, so the flower of the human mind, evolving through countless existences in lower forms of life, only reaches the heaven of liberation when the selfish impulse of desire has ceased to act

This was the great truth, known to the Rishis of old but obscured by Brahman ritualism, which flashed upon the Buddha's mind as he meditated under the pipal tree at Gayā Pure food and pure water did not suffice to cleanse the mind from gross desires The virtue of the sacrificial fire lay in the pure heart of the sacrificer There was no magic in the intonation of a sacred text when the mind was evil Self

torture was no escape from re birth and its attendant suffering. The Devas of the Āryans were themselves subject to the Dharma, the Eternal Law of causation and the Aryan Way was the path of righteousness open to all mankind.

The Buddha's religious teaching was agnostic. He propounded a rule of conduct (dharma) analogous to that of Confucius and Lao tse for the attainment of Nirvāna, the perfect peace which follows on the extinction of selfish personal cravings and ambitions. The means by which this was to be won he called the Āryan Eightfold Path, after the rite of circumambulation of an Āryan village or town which usually had eight gates. The divisions of the Āryan Path were I Right Views or Truthfulness, II Right Aspirations, III Right Speech, IV Right Conduct, V Right Mode of Livelihood, VI Right Effort, VII Right Mindfulness and lastly when the goal was reached, VIII Right Rapture.

Recognising that the highest ideals were not easily attainable under ordinary conditions of life he founded an ascetic Order, bound by strict rules of conduct similar to those of Brahman discipleship but without sacrifices or priests since there were no gods to be worshipped. The simple ritual consisted only in reciting or meditating upon the words of the Master and the rules of the Order. This Sangha or community, as it was called, was constituted on the principles of self government followed by the Sākya clan. It had four grades, corresponding to the four varnas of Indo Āryan society, and its spiritual code, the Dharma, was named after the unwritten social and political code of Āryāvarta though caste rules were not strictly observed. The Sangha implied an aristocracy of intellect, detached from all worldly pursuits, to which the race name "Āryan" was given. The Buddha was a reformer, but not a revolutionist. He would not allow the Brahman's claim to spiritual superiority by right of birth, but he upheld existing social obligations. The Sangha was not a universal brotherhood. Initiation was refused to persons

in the royal service, as well as to slaves, debtors, robbers, or criminals who had been branded. With great reluctance he also organised a sisterhood, so that women especially widows, might learn to follow the Path, with the obligation of being always strictly subordinate to the brethren. Just as the Āryans of the *Rig-Veda* despised the sorcery and black magic of the Dasyus, so the Buddha condemned astrology, witchcraft and divination. There were no mysteries for the novitiates to learn. the language of the Order was the common speech of the people, but music, song and dancing, which had gladdened the hearts of the Āryans, were not allowed. The decoration of the monasteries was as puritanical as the ritual—drawings or paintings of the human figure or of animals were forbidden by the Law.

The whole of the Buddha's long life, from the time of the Enlightenment to his death at Kusināgara, *circa* 483 B.C., was devoted to active propaganda, chiefly in the villages and towns of Kosala (Oudh) and Magadha (Bihār), starting from Kāśī (Benares), which was already famous as a great seat of Brahmanical learning, and only halting the three months of the rainy season when the Sangha met for discussion and instruction. The ruling chiefs were very ready to listen to one of their own class who disputed the authority of the Brahmins. The common people were attracted by the nobility and simplicity of a doctrine which made the path of knowledge accessible to them, without the Brahmin's extortionate fees, and relieved them of the terror of witchcraft and sorcery. Not a few of the Buddha's converts were Brahmins who, recognising the futility of animal sacrifices and bodily penances, found in his law of causation an acceptable compromise between the atheistic doctrines then current and the teaching of the Upanishads regarding the world soul. The majority of the Brahmins, apart from the horde of mystery mongers and spiritual quacks, were quite willing to recognise a moral law sustaining the universe but clung to the Vedic idea of a personal manifestation.

cosmic forces, though the host of Devas were beginning to be synthesised into a trinity of powers—Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva. The first represented the creative power of prayer and sacrifice, as taught by orthodox Brahmanism. Vishnu, the function of stability, order or preservation which the Āryan chief exercised in the worldly state. Siva, known in Vedic times as Rudra, stood for the powers of involution or destruction. he was worshipped as an apotheosis of the Yogi who by union with the universal Spirit obtained release from worldly attachments.

The Buddha's theoretical teaching in its pessimistic outlook upon life had a close affinity with the Saiva cult, which also pointed out a path of true knowledge by which liberation from suffering might be reached. But it was not on its merits as a philosophical theory that Buddhism was able gradually to consolidate a congeries of petty states into a greater Āryāvarta, and to form a common meeting ground for disputants of many different schools, both within and without its own fold. The Buddhist Sangha, besides specialising in the doctrine of salvation which it offered to its own members, provided all the laity of Āryāvarta with a free education in spiritual truths of vital importance for human happiness and contentment. The inquisitive common folk who dared not profane a Brahman sanctuary could collect around the meeting place of the Order and hear the plain words of the Good Law. Many of the Buddha's followers were wealthy merchants who were accustomed to use writing in their business transactions.<sup>1</sup> So after the Master's death, besides the memorised record of his Brahman converts, who looked upon writing as a vulgar, worldly accomplishment, the beginning of a sacred vernacular literature was made, written on strips of birch bark or palm leaves, chiefly in the form of sūtras or aphorisms enumerating concisely the points

<sup>1</sup> The Brahma script, from which all Indian alphabets are derived, is believed to have been introduced about 800 B.C. by traders coming by way of Mesopotamia (Macdonell, *Hist. Sansk. Lit.* pp. 15-16).



of the Law. Similar aids to memory, taught orally, had been used by Vedic scholars for preserving the ritual of sacrifice and household worship and the dharma of Brahmanism but as there was no secret doctrine in Buddhism reserved for an inner circle of initiates, the popular instruction given by the *bhikkhus* was the means of creating a common cultural bond uniting all classes in Āryāvarta much more closely than the formal ritualism of Vedic times had done. The appeal which the Buddha made to the clan feeling of Āryāvarta by organising his Sangha according to the ancient tradition of the tribal assemblies, was very effective. Thus the growth of Buddhism may have made easier Chandragupta Maurya's task of uniting under one banner all the clans of Northern India after the death of Alexander the Great, although it was not until the time of Asoka (274-237 B.C.), when state aid was lavishly given for the support of Buddhist propaganda that the monasteries were efficiently organised as centres of popular education, such as they are in Ceylon and Burma at the present day. At first they followed the ascetic cultural tradition of the Vedic āśhrams, only putting it on a broader and sounder ethical basis.

There were many lesser lights in the Āryāvarta of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., striving to pierce the gloom of ignorance and priestly obscurantism, but only one of them Vardhamāna Mahāvira, "The Great Hero, has a place in history. Born of a Kshatriya family at Vaisali, the capital of Videha (Tirhut), he, like the Buddha sought the path of knowledge and entered an old established monastery reserved for the sons of the aristocracy. Then for ten years he wandered about the Magadha country—afterwards known as Bihar, the land of monasteries (*vihāras*), learning from peripatetic teachers and the hermits of the forest retreats. Finally, at the age of forty two, he associated himself with other "Jinas," or conquerors of self, and founded a monastic order to show the way of release from the par of re birth. It was open to all classes, Āryan and non Ā

those who did not take the full vows of asceticism but only practised self discipline and obeyed the general rules of the Order were admitted as lay members or hearers (*Srautakas*). Mahavira like the Buddha was a philosopher of the dualistic Sankhya school. He taught the multiplicity of souls or *jivas* and according to his creed there is no Supreme Creative Being but every *jiva* by divesting itself from the impurity of Karma may in time achieve divine perfection. Matter was not as the Buddhists declared only Maya or illusion. It was eternal and contained within itself the principle of life. The *jiva* in its striving for liberation needed the uplift, both from within and without of pure thoughts and righteous deed. It was the duty of every Jain believer to render this mutual help. Mahavira was a nature lover brought up in the traditions of the forest sanctuaries who found a moral meaning even in the lowest forms of life. callous injury to any of them was a sin against the divinity latent within.<sup>1</sup> Somewhat inconsistently when the human soul had cleansed itself from the impurities of present and past lives it was highly meritorious to suppress the life element in the body by a process of slow starvation. The curative effect of total abstinence from food upon many bodily ailments beyond the power of the medicine man no doubt induced the belief in its spiritual efficacy.

For the layman not interested in metaphysical subtleties Jain and Buddhist principles differed little. But while Buddhist thought tended to relax the ascetic rules of the Order and to adapt them to a world wide propaganda Jainism maintained down to modern times the extreme severity of its bodily penances and with regard to caste became as narrow as orthodox Hinduism. Many of its royal devotees made the stern sacrifice demanded of a self conqueror but the cold intellectualism of Jain dogma never stirred the soul of the

<sup>1</sup> The Jains anticipated modern science in attributing a rudimentary state of consciousness to plants rocks and even to natural elements such as water and fire.

Indian masses in the same way as Buddhist idealism, though the Jain schools played their part in the spread of popular education

The Buddha's and Mahāvīra's attack upon Brahmanical privileges and prejudices, so far from provoking repressive measures from the ruling chiefs of Magadha, seem to have received considerable support from them, and the conception of a Sangha or Āryan league, opening the way of knowledge to every freeman, gave a wider outlook to Āryan statecraft. It was in Magadha that the idea of a greater Āryāvarta, a political unity subject to a common law, the Dharma, administered by the king and his councillors, began to germinate. However wide apart the philosophical and religious theories to which the Dharma was adjusted might be,<sup>1</sup> the axiom assumed in all the debating halls of Āryāvarta, the existence of a world-order controlling man made laws,<sup>2</sup> must have fixed the minds of the ruling classes, always intensely interested in such speculations, upon the idea of a world state and of a Chakravartin, a world-ruler to defend and uphold the Dharma as the Vicegerent of Vishnu, or Vāsudeva, the upholder of the Universe.

Implicit in this ideal of a religious government was the reciprocal devotion (*bhakti*) of the subject to the ruler, or a common obedience to a divine order of things. As a religious cult, or means of salvation, the *bhakti marga*—the way of faith and love—was preached by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and by many Vaishnavite teachers both before and after the Christian era, as an alternative or complement to the way of

<sup>1</sup> They ranged from the monistic theory of the early Upanishads to the rationalism of the Sāṅkhya school which pervaded the Buddha's and Mahāvīra's teaching—from the theism of Patañjali to the atomic theory of the Universe propounded by the Vaiśeṣika school.

<sup>2</sup> An exception testifying to the freedom of thought permitted in early India, was the atheistic school of the Charvakas, who denied the existence of a moral law or of anything imperceptible by human sense. In their view the king ruled by virtue of his own power and for his own pleasure. There was no life after death, no reality beyond matter, and the only object of existence was the enjoyment of life according to individual opportunity.

knowledge (*jñāna marga*) Bhakti puts complete self surrender above the limited self knowledge of the philosophical systems, discipline of the will above discipline of the intellect. Like the *bushido* of Japan the *bhakti* cult was a potent political force, both for good and evil. It could inspire the Kshatriya and the Sati to the most heroic self sacrifice when their honour was at stake and when in Asoka ruled it could rise to the highest ideals of ethics and politics. But its appeal to the emotions rather than to the intellect made ignorant followers of the *bhakti marga* an easy prey for unscrupulous or incompetent teachers. The power it put in the hands of an absolute monarchy was often abused though the moral restraints of Dharma checked to some extent irresponsible government.

## CHAPTER VI

### INDIA, PERSIA AND MACEDON, 642-323 B.C.—INVASION OF INDIA BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT

THE three centuries from about 600 to 350 B.C. saw the gradual rise of Magadha to the political as well as the intellectual supremacy of North eastern India, starting with the foundation of the Saisunāga dynasty *circa* 642 by a Rajā of Benares, Saisunāga, who made Rajagriha near Gaya, his capital. The fifth of the line, Bimbisāra (*circa* 582-54) was contemporary with Mahavira and the Buddha. He was probably a kinsman of the former as well as a patron of Jainism. He and his successor, Ajātāśatru, who founded the famous city of Pataliputra, obtained control of the Ganges valley partly by force of arms and partly by matrimonial alliances. In this process of political consolidation, which gradually extended to the whole of the ancient Madhyadesa, many of the old clans whose popular assemblies had held in check the absolutist tendencies of hereditary chieftainship were either absorbed or broken up.

Among them was the Buddha's own clan, the Sākīyas, whose political constitution was the model for his Sangha. Virudhaka, Rāja of Kosala, about 490 B C, sacked Kapilavastu and put to the sword most of the Sākīyas. The Great Teacher himself died at Kusinagara seven years afterwards.

The democratic tendency of Buddhist and Jain teaching may have had its influence in the overthrow of Saisunāga overlordship, *circa* 413 B C, by the Nandas, a dynasty of Sūdra origin, who ruled for nearly a century until their contempt for the dharma of Indo Āryan royalty caused a general revolt and the extermination of the line, *circa* 321 B C. Before this happened the greater part of Northern India was politically consolidated under the rule of three powerful dynasties, that of Magadha, Kosala, whose history went back to Vedic times, and Avantī—the latter comprising Rājputana and Mālwa which had its capital at Ujjain. But the land gates of India and the whole of the Indus valley were in possession of another Āryan power, which in military achievements far outstripped its Indian rivals. About the time when Magadha began to be united under the Saisunāga dynasty the Āryan tribes of Media welded together under one strong ruler,<sup>1</sup> Uvakhshātru (Kyaxares), freed themselves from the cruel yoke of their old Semitic adversaries, the Assyrians (Asuras), by the capture of Nineveh. In 550 B C another strong man, Kurush (Cyrus), the Persian, having deposed Uvakhshātru's son, Astyages, led the advance of all the Iranian tribes westward. The spiritual enthusiasm of Vedic times, reawakened by the teaching of Zoroaster, may have inspired the martial ardour of the Irāmans, for, according to tradition, one of Zoroaster's converts was Vishtaspu (Hystaspes), the father of Darius I, who succeeded Cyrus in 522 B C. After the conquest by Cyrus of Babylonia

and of Lydia, which controlled the Mediterranean terminus of the great Asiatic land routes, it was easy for Darius with a powerful army and a treasury replenished by the wealth of Croesus to seize the main routes of Indian commerce with the west through the Indus valley. His admiral, Skylax, an Asiatic Greek, explored the waterways of the Punjab, and with the timber which the virgin forests, protected by Āryan religious laws, still furnished abundantly, he built a fleet and sailed down the Indus to the sea<sup>1</sup>. Darius was thus able to control the sea communications between India and Babylonia. He exacted a heavy tribute from his Indian satrapy, 185 hundredweights of gold dust.

There is no record of any organised effort by the tribes of the Punjab to hold the land-gates of India against their kinsmen of Irān. The land of the seven rivers, as it was called in Vedic times, stood outside the great political and intellectual movements of Kosala and Magadha. Taksha-silā, the principal city, was a stronghold of the old Brahmanical learning. The Vedic tribal tradition, to which the numerous petty kingdoms, oligarchies and republics of the Punjab were attached, was too limited in its political outlook to take note of great world-movements either in the east or west. There was no capable leader among the Brahmans to hold in check tribal jealousy and intrigues which prevented an effective combination for the defence of Āryāvarta.

The great care which Darius bestowed upon his communications and admirable system of imperial posts between his capital and the far distant provinces made Sūsa and Persepolis comparatively easy of access, both from India and Asiatic Greece, during the great king's reign and until the final defeat of Xerxes' army by the Greeks at Plataea (479 B.C.). But little is known of the effect of such relations between India and Persia. A contingent of Indian archers took part in

<sup>1</sup> Skylax wrote an account of his experiences from which Herodotus and other Greek writers extracted some of their information about India.

the battle, and the subsequent disasters to the Persian arms which caused the Ionian cities of Asia Minor to assert their independence had a similar effect upon the subject states of the Indus valley, though nominally the Punjab and Sind remained a part of the Persian empire up to the time of Alexander the Great. The ancient script called Kharoshthi, used in Afghanistan and Northern Punjab down to A.D. 200, is supposed to have been introduced by the Persian officials.

The century and a half during which the degenerate and profligate successors of Darius I filled the Persian throne coincided with the rule of the last two Rājas of the Saisunāga line and that of the Sudra dynasty of Magadha—the Nandas. During this period in India no important political events are on record. In 327 B.C., three years after the death of Darius III, when Alexander, having crossed the Hindu Kush, began his march towards India through the Kābul valley, the political conditions of the north-west showed little change from the days of the great Darius. The petty states of the Indus valley were too much occupied with their own quarrels to think of the common danger. At first the only opposition to the new invaders came from the warlike tribes of the Chitral country and the Swat and Bajaur valleys. When they were subdued after nine months' fierce fighting the passage of the Indus was made easy by the friendly help of Āmbhi, Rājā of Taksha-sila on the eastern side of the river. Āmbhi needed Alexander's protection against his neighbour, Paurava or Porus, who ruled the country between the Jihlam and Chinab rivers. At Taksha-sila Alexander refreshed his army and learnt much about the condition of the country, for the Brahmanical schools of the city were resorted to by the sons of Indian nobility from far and near, even from Kosala and Magadha. Then assured of Āmbhi's loyalty, he continued his march in a south-easterly direction, secured a favourable battle ground on the left bank of the Jihlam and won a decisive victory over a great army of the Indo-Āryan clans with numerous chariots and war elephants assembled under Porus' banner. Porus was

the expedition arrived safely at Pattala an old Dravidian port at the head of the Delta where Alexander established a naval station. When arrangements for the government of his new satrapy were completed Alexander sent part of his army back to Susa by the Mulla pass and he himself with tireless energy led another division through the unknown country of South Baluchistan expecting Nearchus with the fleet and the rest of the troops to keep in touch with him. In the Makran deserts a great part of the imperial army with the spoils of the expedition were lost. Alexander returned to Susa in 324 B.C. to find the mighty empire he had begun to build up upon the Persian foundation already in disorder. He died the following year at Babylon.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE MAURIAN DYNASTY—CHANDRA GUPTA MAURIA

THE political lessons of Alexander's campaign were not lost upon the Brahmans of the Punjab some of whom had taken an active part in the resistance offered to the invaders and had felt the heavy hand of the Macedonian war lord. The Brahman in his capacity of *purohita* or royal chaplain was a leading member of the council of state and an acknowledged expert in *Artha-sastra* or political science. The Brahmans of Takshasila who even in the Buddha's time had been political teachers for the sons of the great ruling families of Northern India had ample opportunities of exchanging ideas with the Magi the priestly families of Iran and had watched the growth of a greater Aryavarta in Western Asia first under Persian and afterwards under Greek domination.

The old Vedic ideal with its theory of Dharma and the Indo-Aryan village community more democratic than the free cities of Greece had for many centuries provided India



both north and south of the Vindhya, with the spiritual and economic ties which create a sense of nationality. But while the well stocked farmsteads<sup>1</sup> and prosperous trading communities of the Punjab which collected tolls from all the main routes of Indian land commerce were a tempting bait for a foreign invader the variegated tribal organisation of the Indian borderlands derived from the nomadic and predatory habits of the Vedic Āryans were ill adapted for the altered conditions of world politics. Neither monarchy, oligarchy nor republic, on the tribal basis of Vedic times, could hold its own against a well-organised foreign army seeking for plunder or tribute. Magadha, which for two centuries had been the chief centre of intellectual progress, was the only Indian state with sufficient political cohesion to maintain its independence.

Among the princelings who were studying at Takshaśilā at the time of the Macedonian invasion, was Chandragupta Maurya, a scion of the royal house of Magadha, who had a personal grudge against the Nandas. Prompted no doubt, by his Brahman tutor, Chāṇakya, Chandragupta had visited Alexander's camp with the hope of obtaining recognition of his own hereditary rights in case Magadha shared the fate of all the petty states of the Punjab. This opportunity failed him, but Alexander's sudden death in 323 B.C., and the partition of his empire, which immediately followed, gave Chandragupta and his political mentor a far better one. While Alexander's generals were disputing in Western Asia, Chandragupta led a military rising in the Punjab by which the Macedonian garrison was exterminated, and a dynastic revolution in the Ganges valley which placed him on the throne of the Nandas. Before peace was fully restored in Western Asia, the glory of Sūsa and Persepolis had passed to Pāṭaliputra. For the first time in Indian history a united Āryāvarta, strong enough to resist any invader from Europe or from Asia.

<sup>1</sup> Ambhi presented Alexander with 3000 oxen "fatted for the shambles" and more than 10 000 sheep.

stretched from sea to sea—from the Hindu Kush and Himālayas to beyond the Vindhya

Chandragupta and his descendants more than realised the legendary triumphs of Rāma and Yudhishtira, the heroes of the *Ramāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, as a Samrāj or Chakravartin—an emperor or paramount ruler of Āryāvarta. The panegyrics of the Court bards who sang the praises of the Mauryan line found no permanent place in Indian literature, but a work of the highest historical importance, the *Artha-sāstra* of Kautilya, a treatise on political theory and practice attributed to Chandragupta's great prime minister, Chanakya himself, gives a wonderful insight into the methods of Mauryan administration. Kautilya's work is part of a great body of Sanskrit literature dealing with the different sciences, such as medicine (*Ayur Veda*), architecture and craftsmanship (*Śilpa sāstra*) and astronomy (*jyotiṣha*) which are appended to the Vedas as manuals of practical life. As he refers to five recognised schools of political science, and mentions the names of thirteen previous authorities, it must be concluded that *Artha sāstra* had engaged the attention of Brahman thinkers long before Alexander's time. Kautilya gives no historical or personal details, like Abul Fazl in his *Institutes of Akbar*, but the disorder and unrest of the time are perhaps reflected in the cruel punishments prescribed for offences against the law. As a teacher he is not expounding dharma sāstra, the law of conduct, but practical methods of administration according to the principles of artha vidyā, the science of social prosperity. Even the lofty ethics of the *Mahābhārata* do not allow the ideal ruler to show any compassion for the wrong doer.

Kautilya asserts the rights of the Āryan freeman and advises respect for the established customs of subject peoples, but shows no leanings towards democratic forms of government. Self rule was, indeed, the Brahman's ideal, but he who would govern others must first learn to govern himself, and the path of self knowledge and self discipline was not an

only one Kautilya was no class politician. Knowledge and devotion to his dharma were the Brahman's sole title to his social rights and privileges. The ignorant Brahman forfeited his civic status. The Brahman wrong doer was accountable to the civil law. The king himself with the help and advice of his councillors was to maintain his authority by his knowledge of artha-vidyā and unselfish devotion to his dharma as head of the state.

Indian tradition preserved in a Hindu drama of about the fifth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> and the personal testimony of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the Mauryan court justify the belief that Chandragupta lived up to the ideals of his political guru, in whom he placed unlimited trust. The first effect of Chanakya's masterly statecraft was that when (c. 305 B.C.) Seleucus, as king of Babylon and Syria, put another Greek army in the field to assert his claim to Alexander's Indian provinces, he was met by Chandragupta with a well organised Indian force very much stronger than any of the armies of the Punjab which Alexander had defeated. Seleucus was compelled to retire, and Chandragupta brought under his banner as Chakravartin not only the whole of the Punjab but the ancient home of the Rishis in the mountains of Afghanistan and Beluchistan, together with the fortresses of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. Seleucus was glad to make friends with so powerful a neighbour. He sent a daughter to Chandragupta's son, and an ambassador, Megasthenes, to maintain diplomatic relations with the Mauryan court, whose account of India in the fourth century B.C. is partially preserved in the writings of other Greek authors.

Secure against foreign invasion Chandragupta was now free to devote himself to internal affairs. The highly centralised system of administration described in the *Artha-shastra* no doubt applied principally to the home provinces of the empire, Magadha and Pataliputra its capital, the Calcutta of the fourth century B.C. which linked together the main land

<sup>1</sup> *The Mudra rakshasa*. The signet of Rakshasa by Viṣakhadutta.

ways and waterways of the empire. Āryāvarta was now both a land and sea power. Its commerce and industry<sup>1</sup> yielded large revenues to the state. Chandragupta kept up the Āryan tradition of road-making. In towns and forts the chariot roads were paved with stone or laid, like the old forest-ways, with trunks of trees. The northern land-route from Pātaliputra went over the Himālayan passes into Tibet and China. A waterway navigable for coasting vessels brought the precious products of Southern India—pearls, corals, diamonds, gold and other metals—right up to the quays of the city harbour. A main road passing through Kāśī and Ujjain linked Magadha with the great seaport Bharukacchā (Broach), which had traded with Babylon and Egypt from time immemorial. Communication with Taksha-silā and the north-west was kept up by a royal road, the old caravan route, along which trees were planted, wells were dug and distances were marked by pillars. The state looked after the upkeep and policing of the main routes, building rest-houses for pilgrims and merchants, and post stations for the imperial messengers. The adjoining villages supplied labour in lieu of taxes. Foreign merchants, when provided with the necessary passports, were assisted with information, and in case of sickness provided with medical aid. The water communications were also well organised, though Kautilya considered the landways safer and less liable to obstruction. The state protected travellers by sea and river from pirates, and maintained harbours, bridges and ferries. It also directly assisted trade by transporting merchandise and passengers in government vessels, and by giving financial facilities to, well-known foreign merchants.

Chandragupta's civil service seems to have been efficient, and his prime minister had the highest reputation for integrity and disinterested devotion to the state. The *Artha-sāstra*,

<sup>1</sup> The *Artha-sāstra* mentions skins, textiles of cotton, wool and silk, elephants, horses and fragrant substances as the principal articles of commerce.

however puts little faith in the honesty of government officials generally. It specifies about forty different ways of embezzlement or falsification of accounts with which practical statecraft must reckon. For checking maladministration and for keeping in touch with distant provinces Chandragupta maintained a trained body of reporters or secret service men who under various disguises acted as political agents, detectives, news writers, confidential messengers and common informers. Their duty was to keep the king informed of the state of public opinion, the conduct of vassal princes, ministers and other officials, to assist in the detection of crime and the maintenance of order and to counter the intrigues of foreign emissaries. Kautilya had no scruples about the methods employed for obtaining information provided it was useful and accurate. The reports were carefully scrutinised and checked and the punishment for false information was heavy. According to Megasthenes the reporters were generally able and trustworthy.

The work of about thirty different state departments described by Kautilya embraced most of the activities of a modern civilised government. Education was provided for by grants of land free of taxation to learned Brahmins who, says Megasthenes, lived abstemiously and taught all who came for instruction. Agriculture was assisted by great irrigation works. On the Crown domains much attention was given to cattle breeding and dairy farming. The *Arthaśāstra* even refers to weather forecasts and rainfall statistics. Mines were part of the Crown domains; they were sometimes worked by the state, apparently with slave or convict labour, but were also leased out to private persons. The state took an active part in encouraging commerce and industry; it regulated gambling and the drink traffic. Careful provision for famine relief was also taken into account. Kautilya ordains that half the corn in the state granaries should be kept in reserve for this purpose. It was a recognised duty to establish hospitals in the great towns, by either public or private benevolence; they were

provided with medicinal herbs grown on the Crown lands. Surgeons attended to the wounded on the field of battle and women looked after their diet. The horrors of warfare were moreover greatly mitigated by the Aryan rule that armies should not molest agriculturists, ravage their crops or cut down their trees, provided they refrained from hostile acts. Megasthenes notes with amazement the spectacle of two armies fighting while the tillers of the soil continued their peaceful labours close by, undisturbed by any sense of danger. It is evident that the humanities were observed in India even before Asoka's reign.

The elaborate bureaucratic system of which the great city of Pataliputra was the centre could hardly have been successful unless it had been based upon established Indo-Aryan customs and co-ordinated with the traditional system of local self-government. The republics, oligarchies and principalities of the Punjab furnished contingents to the imperial armies and paid their dues to Chandragupta as protector of Aryavarta, but Chanakya's policy was to leave them undisturbed in all matters of local administration. This rule applied also to the rights and privileges of religious communities, of villages and the numerous co-operative organisations or guilds (*srenyas*) which enjoyed a considerable measure of self-government. The village itself was a co-operative body which, on the one hand, was responsible for the maintenance of by-roads and of minor irrigation works and on the other hand had its own grazing grounds and rights in forest produce and its own tribunals for settling domestic affairs. Some branches of agriculture and nearly all handicrafts were organised as guilds which both regulated wages and prices and maintained a high standard of material and workmanship. The merchant guilds especially were powerful enough to exercise a real check upon any abuse of royal authority. The king consulted them with regard to the levy of taxes. They enlisted armed guards for the protection of caravans; sometimes also they disturbed the public peace for Kautilya enacts that no guilds except

co operative local guilds were to be allowed in the villages of the kingdom <sup>1</sup>

A Chakravartin's prerogatives with regard to land tenure, according to early Indo Āryan law, are clearly defined by Jaimini in the *Mīmāṃsā*, apropos of the gifts due to Brahmans for performing Vedic sacrifices. The legal maxim, says Jaimini, that the king is lord of all excepting priestly property, concerns his authority for punishing the wicked and protecting the good. His kingly power is for government of the realm and suppression of wrong doing for that purpose he receives taxes and levies fines from offenders. But right of property is not thereby invested in him. He has property in house and fields which belonged to a conquered king, or were acquired by purchase or other means, but not in those which belonged to his own subjects. The earth is not the king's but belongs to all beings enjoying the fruits of their own labours <sup>2</sup>. The king's right of gift was thus legally restricted to lands which constituted the Crown domains, though a monarch strong enough to defy public opinion did not always bow to the dictates of Brahman jurists.

Indian records detail minutely the duties of kings and the qualities they should possess, but before the Muhammadan era rarely give us an intimate knowledge of royal personalities. At most they tell us whether kings were true to their dharma or not. There can be little doubt that the first of the Mauryan line was true to his. Strong both in peace and war, he and Chānakya laid the foundation of political and social security without which Asoka's world wide mission would have been a failure. If he was cruel it was not for cruelty's sake. He was a great general and organiser without being a debauchee, a king of kings and a hard working servant of the state. Chānakya, the king maker, master of black magic and of social

<sup>1</sup> Sukrachārya another authority on *Artha śāstra* on the same ground forbids the king's soldiers or his officers to live in the villages or interfere in their affairs.

<sup>2</sup> See Colebrooke's *Miscell. Essays*, vol. 1, p. 320.

science, cynical and unscrupulous, perhaps, but a logical and consistent statesman, lived frugally, it is said, in a thatched mud hut close to the splendid palace of Chandragupta, receiving his chela's homage whenever the great king came from his council hall to visit him.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE MAURYAN DYNASTY (*continued*)—BINDUSĀRA, *CIRC.* 298–274 B.C.; ASOKA, *CIRC.* 274–237 B.C.



big battalions. The extension of the Magadhan suzerainty southwards over part of the Mysore plateau was perhaps achieved by Bindusara. His famous son Asoka succeeded about 24 B.C. but was not formally consecrated as Chakravartin by the ceremonial sprinkling of Ganges water (*abhiseka*) until 269. The Magadhan empire at that time extended nearly as far south as the latitude of Madras and included all Northern India up to the strategic frontier of the Hindu Kush. The only danger to its political stability was apparently the refusal of the Raja of Kalinga to acknowledge Asoka's overlordship. This ancient kingdom, richly forested and famous for its war elephants, lay along the eastern ghats between the rivers Mahanadi and Godavari. One of the main trade routes between north and south ran through it. According to all the rules of *Arthashastra* Asoka, as suzerain of the Deccan, was bound to remove this thorn in his side. The whole people of Kalinga fought desperately for their independence against overwhelming odds and the war was an unusually bloody one. Kalinga was annexed but in the hour of victory Asoka was struck with deep remorse for the sufferings he had inflicted upon innocent Āryan folk. Brahmins and pious men of all sects and for the slaughter of thousands of brave men fighting for their liberty. His public confession of the wrong he had committed<sup>1</sup> inscribed on the rocks so that all his subjects might witness it is still after the lapse of more than 2000 years a great lesson in political morality. For the first time in history a mighty monarch at the height of his power instead of boasting in high flown phrases of his victories expresses deep compassion for the conquered and announces his resolve that henceforth the law of humanity shall be the highest law of the realm—he would conquer only by the might of dharma.

The successive steps which Asoka took to put his resolution into action are recorded in a series of edicts inscribed on rocks and stone pillars in prominent places along the main trade

<sup>1</sup> Edict VIII

routes these epoch making human documents are the first epigraphical records of Indian political history yet discovered. In effect, they show that Asoka made use of the whole machinery of government, so ably organised by his grandfather, to educate his people in "ancient standards of right conduct leading to length of days,"<sup>1</sup> which the Buddha had proclaimed as the Āryan truth and the means of alleviating human suffering—the duties of parents and children, pupils and teachers, husbands and wives, friends and comrades, masters and servants, laymen and religious devotees. Without disparaging Brahmans, for he did reverence "to all religious persuasions whether ascetics or householders," Asoka's desire was that "adherents of all sects should be fully instructed," and never in the history of the world has a statesman or schoolman formulated a better code than that which Asoka laid down for the elementary education of his people.

In all the humanitarian duties of the state long recognised by Āryan tradition, such as the support of religious foundations, the building of rest houses for pilgrims and travellers, the planting of shade trees and orchards along the public roads, the cultivation of medicinal plants and the care of the sick and poor, Asoka showed an untiring devotion to dharma. But in accepting the Buddha's interpretation of dharma he broke away entirely from the materialistic principles of Chāṇakya's political economy. Without committing himself to any metaphysical or theological opinions, Asoka insisted that the moral law was above any sacrificial system, and that its fulfilment was not only essential for the welfare of the state but a means of self-culture open to all people within and without the Āryan pale. No doubt popular feeling was on Asoka's side in this bold attack upon the Brahman's position as priest of sacrifice.

The Devas showed no signs of wrath, the heavens did not fall, when the Great King, his viceroys, governors, and the whole official hierarchy ceased to invoke them with Brahmanical

<sup>1</sup> 2nd Minor Rock Edict.

mantras, and the high places of sacrifice soaked in the blood of countless victims, were dedicated to the interpretation of "the Āryan law" in the common speech of the people. So in 252 B.C., or about nine years after his conversion to Buddhism Asoka was able to proclaim on the rocks of Mysore the triumph of his Master's cause— "The gods who all over India were regarded as true gods have now become untrue gods" <sup>1</sup>

Asoka's nobility of mind and his genius as a propagandist counted for much but he could hardly have inflicted so signal a defeat upon orthodox Brahmanism if the philosophical schools of Magadha had not prepared the way for religious reform, so that Asoka could command a large number of well-instructed and willing agents to act as interpreters of the Good Law throughout his wide dominions men free from the official vices of "envy, lack of perseverance harshness, impatience, want of application and indolence," against which they were specially warned by imperial proclamation (Kalinga Edict). Among them, doubtless, were many liberal-minded Brahmins who suffered little in social prestige by ceasing to perform their sacrificial functions, while the influence they exercised in the councils of the Sangha can be traced in the gradual evolution of Buddhist theology. Nor is it likely that Asoka succeeded in weaning the mass of the people, especially women folk, from the many domestic rites, "the manifold corrupt and worthless ceremonies," as he called them, in which the services of Brahmins were generally required.

Asoka's Edicts were written in Māgadhi, an early form of Pali, which in Asoka's time was probably a *lingua franca* for all Northern India and understood by the educated, or Āry mixed, people of the south. They could be read by most of Asoka's officials, by Buddhist and Jain bhikkus, and by the rich mercantile classes who formed a large proportion of Buddhist and Jain converts, but they give no indication as to how far the mass of the people were literate. There is no doubt, however,

<sup>1</sup> No. 1 Minor Rock Edict

<sup>2</sup> Edict IV.

that the Edicts were most effective propaganda by constantly attracting large crowds to listen to an interpreter's *viva voce* rendering of the Great King's message

Perhaps the most important part of Asoka's educational programme was the building of a vast number of "stūpas," especially at the holy places dedicated to the Buddha's memory. Buddhist stupas served both as churches and schools. In Vedic times they had been only the funeral mounds in which the ashes of deceased Āryan chieftains were preserved until the rites which ensured the spirit's safe arrival in the land of ancestors were completed. Asoka made them permanent structures of brick and stone to preserve for ever the precious relics of Buddhist saints. They also served as public picture and sculpture galleries, illustrating by a method of artistic symbolism in accordance with the Buddha's own teaching<sup>1</sup> the legends of the many existences through which the Blessed One had come to know the cause of human suffering. And as a congregation of learned Buddhists collected round every great stūpa, it provided a centre for popular education and a nucleus for the great universities of later times. Indian culture gained both in breadth and in depth by the Buddhist teaching of dharma. Early Buddhist teaching, whatever its limitations, was essentially humanist. It insisted that the mind of man should be entirely free to seek knowledge for the good of all mankind. The Devas, whoever or whatever they might be, could take care of themselves and needed no service from men except the service of a pure and unselfish life.

But the real science of Brahman ritualism, which marked the first stage in the evolution of Indo Āryan culture, was by no means discarded as useless. It was only adapted to the new order of things and to the service of the whole community. The craftsmen attached to the royal service in pre-Buddhist times were by reason of their sacrificial duties skilled in the

<sup>1</sup> The Buddha forbade the bhikkhus to make "imaginative drawings, with figures of men and women" (*Chullavagga*, vi 3 2)

science of the *sūtra*s the geometrical rules for the construction of Vedic altars Asoka and other Buddhist sovereigns turned this knowledge to account in the many buildings and irrigation works which they set on foot for the public benefit Thus the science of Vedic ritual discarded by the literati of Buddhism was preserved and developed in the tradition of the Indian master builder The literati themselves, freed from the obscurantist trammels of sacerdotal magic and stimulated by the removal of caste hindrances cultivated knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of their fellow creatures Asoka's influence indirectly helped to divert the logical Brahman mind from abstract speculation and sacrificial ceremonial to the cultivation of positive sciences and to give that impulse to the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, pathology and medicine which later on made the universities of Northern India famous throughout civilised Asia It was the humanist influence of Buddhist teaching which accounted for its appeal not only to many primitive peoples with animistic beliefs who were untouched by Vedic Brahmanism but also to the Hellenised princes of Bactria and Parthia, who after Asoka's death began to conquer N W India The latter found no difficulty in accepting the Sankhyan ideas of Buddhist philosophy which were closely akin to those of Empedocles and other Greek thinkers<sup>1</sup>

But the very rapid spread of Buddhism in Asoka's reign must be attributed chiefly to his own untiring zeal for the cause Besides closely supervising the work of administration and seeing that his injunctions to fulfil the law of dharma were faithfully carried out by his officials he organised numerous missions to distant parts of his own dominions as well as to foreign countries In accordance with the spirit of dharma the presents brought by the missions on Asoka's behalf were the precious medicaments both for man and beast which were

<sup>1</sup> According to Greek tradition, Thales Empedocles Anaxagoras, Democritus and others journeyed to the East to study philosophy (Macdonell *Hist Sansk Lit* p 22)

collected from all parts of India in the state storehouses. The mission to Ceylon *circa* 251-250, which was the most important, was headed by Asoka's younger brother, Mahendra, or Mahanda. Indo-Aryan culture had long since taken root there, so the ground was well prepared for the Buddha's teaching. The young king Tissa was as ardent a convert as Asoka himself, and Ceylon from that time became one of the chief strongholds of the faith. Mahendra joined afterwards by his sister, Sanghamitra, who like himself had taken the vows of the Order, remained permanently in the island. The rock-hewn cell in which the royal monk lived, and a great stūpa consecrated to his ashes, still exist near the ruined city of Anurādhapura.

The other important foreign missions recorded in Asoka's Edicts were to the rulers of Syria and Egypt Antiochus Theos and Ptolemy Philadelphus, who kept up diplomatic correspondence with the court of Pāṭaliputra, and to the kings of Cyrene and Epirus. More than a thousand years before a flash of Vedic insight had caused a startling revolution in the court of the priest king of Egypt. The Buddha's message had so much in common with higher Greek thought that it could hardly have had such an effect upon either Ptolemy or Antiochus, though Asoka felt justified from the friendly spirit in which it was received in counting these missions among the many victories he had won for the dharma, both at home and abroad. The friendship between Asoka and Antiochus,<sup>1</sup> which made the frontiers of North west India secure, was a political factor of the greatest importance, for it enabled Asoka to concentrate himself entirely upon his religious propaganda.

Many special laws and regulations were made by Asoka for the protection of animals and the restriction of Brahmanical sacrifices. He himself set an example by becoming a strict vegetarian and by substituting religious pilgrimages and

<sup>1</sup> If as seems probable Asoka's grandmother was a daughter of Seleucus I, there was Greek blood in Asoka's veins and Antiochus Theos was his cousin.

inspection tours for the sacrosanct hunting parties of Aryan kings to intrude upon which was a crime punishable by death. He also forbade the burning of forests. Early in his reign he joined the Buddhist Sangha as a lay disciple and later on became a full member, showing his devout regard for the interests of the Church by summoning a general assembly to Pataliputra for the settlement of disputed points of doctrine. But he never allowed religious zeal to interfere in any way with his state duties. The official reporters had access to him at all hours and in all places for said Asoka: "I must work for the welfare of all folk and whatsoever exertions I make are for the end that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy here they may in the next world gain heaven (*suarga*)" (Rock Edict VI).

Asoka reigned about forty years. After the war with Kalinga India enjoyed an unbroken peace, but sixteen years before his death troubles on the north west frontier began to threaten again, when Diodotus, one of the provincial governors of Antiochus Theos, rebelled and set up an independent kingdom. The province of Parthia followed suit. Towards the west the conquests of Alexander soon began to be merged into the mighty empire of Rome, and in the Farther East the Chinese emperor, She hwang ti, by building the Great Wall, stopped the raids of the Mongolian nomads into the valley of the Yellow River and started them on the continuous drift westwards which lasted for many centuries, with momentous consequences both for Europe and for Asia.

Asoka within his lifetime accomplished his aim of making the Sangha the greatest missionary organisation of the world and after his death was canonised as an Arahāt or Buddhist Saint. His desire that his descendants should follow in his footsteps to the end of the world cycle was not fulfilled—none of them were of the same calibre as Chandragupta or Asoka. The custom of plural marriages followed by Indo-Aryan kings even in Vedic times, was one of the weakest points in the governmental scheme. According to traditional

law the hereditary monarch or his ministers nominated as his successor the best qualified among his numerous sons or nearest male relatives. Sukracharya recommends the king to put quietly out of the way evilly disposed members of his family

by tigers or by craft. But the king and the tigers were not always judiciously minded. The succession was more often determined by the intrigue of a favourite wife or by a court faction. The story of the *Ramayana* gives a classic instance of such a palace intrigue. Buddhist legends relate that even the saintly Asoka's household though supervised by his Censors of Dharma<sup>1</sup> was not free from similar domestic troubles.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SOUTHERN INDIA IN ASOKA'S TIME—END OF THE MAURYAN DYNASTY—THE SĪNGA AND KĀṆVA DYNASTIES—THE ANDHRAS INDIAN COLONISATION

UNTIL the final consolidation of the riverine and mountain states of the north under the Mauryan dynasty, Āryan contact with the people south of the Vindhya is only vaguely alluded to in the Kshatriya sagas and in Brahmanical rules of dharma. Asoka's proclamation of the dharma of Buddhism removed from all the inhabitants of the south the stigma of impurity which the Brahmins of Madhyadesa attached to them and gave a great impetus to the southward spread of Āryan learning by which all India was united by cultural ties though political unity was an ideal never perfectly realised.

But long before Asoka's time as soon in fact as the Indo-Āryan river and land traders began to extend their enterprises seawards<sup>2</sup> the necessities of commerce must have helped in the

<sup>1</sup> Dharma mahamatras appointed to supervise all religious orders to prevent wrongful imprisonment and punishment and to distribute imperial charity.

<sup>2</sup> Sea voyages for the sake of gain are alluded to in the *Rigveda*.



formation of colonies at the South Indian seaports as well as along the coast roads. And though the most exclusive Brahman society of the north might regard the Dakshina path<sup>1</sup> as unclean the large and influential Dravidian substratum of Āryavarta would have no such prejudices. So even in later Vedic times or after 600 B.C. there are allusions to Brahmanical settlements in Vidarbha the Western Berars in the wide forest tract south of the Vindhya and along the banks of the Nerbada the Godavari and Krishna rivers. The Dharma sutras dealing with the religious duties and marriage customs, etc., of the people of the Deccan are among the oldest in existence. Nor is it at all unlikely that the Pāndyas who possessed the valuable pearl fisheries and iron deposits at the extreme south of the peninsula and whose capital was Madurai on the Vaigai river, were connected by blood with the Pandu tribe which in Chandragupta's time was located at Mathura on the Jumna.

It is not necessary in this case to assume any warlike expedition or extensive migration southwards. Though Āryan kings in Chandragupta's time and earlier might refuse to sell a philosopher they seemed to have no objection to making a daughter an article of exchange. If this was an exception in royal families it was by no means so in the families of wealthy merchants. A bargain struck with a Dravidian prince for a fair skinned bride might often result in a rich merchant's daughter being installed at the head of a great Dravidian household with servants and bodyguard<sup>1</sup> of her own connections. And as the matriarchal system once prevailed all over Dravidi, and does still so far as village deities are concerned it would naturally follow that in course of time the whole royal family traced their descent from an Indo Āryan tribe and called themselves Kshatriyas. Religious difficulties were settled by introducing an Āryan god into the reigning

<sup>1</sup> It is on record that in the early centuries of the Christian era Yavana or Greek soldiers served in the bodyguards of Dravidian kings.

family's temple and marrying him with a Dravidian goddess. Thus Śiva now presides over the great temple of Madura as the spouse of the Dravidian fish goddess, Minakshi. It was in this manner, probably, that most of the Dravidian royal courts became centres of Āryan culture. Asoka's mission to Ceylon seems to have started from Madura, where Mahendra had established a monastery.

Though the sea routes thus played some part in the Āryanisation of Southern India, the old Indo Āryan aristocracy kept to their forest traditions and their fighting men never became keen sailors, like the Dravidians of the sea board. The mountainous region of the western coast in which the great rivers of the Deccan have their sources was congenial soil for them. A direct immigration from Northern India took place along the ghats—the bathing steps of the Indian Ocean—and Dandakā, or Maharāshtra (the Marāthā country) became another Āryavarta. Nāsik, its capital, probably marks the position of the source of the Godāvari, the Ganges of the Deccan, in Vedic times<sup>1</sup>. Such a holy place was to the Āryan immigrants not inferior in sacrificial virtue to Brahmā's fountain in the Himālayas. Indeed they believed that this and all other holy springs in South India had a subterranean connection with it. The whole line of the western ghats is to this day dotted with Indo Āryan settlements, some associated with later Vedic times, others with Buddhist and Jain missions and many with the stormy times of Hun, Arab and later Muhammadan invasions when the refugees from the devastated temples and monasteries of Hindustan sought the protection of the Hindu monarchs of the south.

South Indian tradition, supported by the *Mahābhārata* and *Ramāyana*, points to a Vedic *muni*, Agastya, of about the sixth century B.C., as the pioneer of Tamil civilisation, and on the Malabar coast the patron deity of the Sudra people, the teacher and protector of dharma whose power is said to

<sup>1</sup> Through erosion of the river's bed the source is now about 30 miles distant from the city.

extend over all the world is the god *Ārya* armed with the *Āryan* warrior's bow and mace. He is worshipped in eight shrines built upon different mountain tops along the western ghats.

Southern India while absorbing *Āryan* culture preserved its own Dravidian languages and many of its social institutions. Its very extensive sea frontiers differentiated its economic life from that of the north. Its sea traders were in the Indian Ocean what the Phoenicians were in the Mediterranean.

The political condition of Southern India in *Asoka's* time was very similar to that of the north before the rise of the *Magadhan* power. A number of more or less *Āryanised* states occupied the mountain forests and mesopotamias of the Deccan levying toll upon the extensive seaport trade and controlling the pearl fisheries and mineral wealth of the country. On the west where the *Narbada* and *Tapti* rivers skirted the *Vindhya* and *Satpura* mountains and opened a convenient passage through the ghats to the sea were the *Bhojas* and *Pulindas*. Their southern neighbours the *Pithikas* and *Rashtrikas* were located between some of the rivers which form the head waters of the *Godavari*. The *Keralas* or *Cheras* occupied the coast strip which now includes the *Malabar* districts and the *Cochin* and *Travancore* states. The *Pandvas* as already stated were at the extreme south. The *Cholas* were to the north of the *Pandvas* on the lands watered by the upper waters of the *Kaveri*. The fertile tract between the *Krishna* and *Godavari* rivers was a possession of the *Andhras* whose ruling family known as the *Satavahana* and reputed to be of *Brahman* descent on the mother's side did not long tolerate the overlordship of the *Mauryan* dynasty. The intermittent struggles of these different powers for the mastery of the Deccan constitutes the political history of Southern India before Islam entered upon the scene.

The gentle piety of *Asoka's* teaching sank deep into the mind of the people both in the north and south. In *Magadha* it found expression in a singularly beautiful folk lore which

still lingers in the villages of Bengal. And in the Pāṇḍyan country the rich Tamil literature which sprang up in the early centuries of the Christian era was all inspired by the noble ethics of Buddhism. But the victories of dharma which Asoka won did not long preserve the peace of Āryāvarta. As soon as the Seleucidan empire began to break up, as it did before Asoka's death, the north-west frontier of India was again exposed to foreign aggression. Greeks and Bactrians—descendants of the colonies planted by Alexander in Eastern Persia—Parthians, Scythians, and finally a great horde of nomads from the steppes of Mongolia struggled with each other to become toll keepers of the land gates of India.

Even in religious questions Āryāvarta did not long maintain a united front. Asoka apparently divided his empire between his two grandsons, Dasaratha and Samprati, the former getting Magadha and the eastern provinces, the latter the western provinces with Ujjain as capital. Dasaratha seems to have upheld the dharma of Buddhism. Samprati was an equally zealous follower of Mahāvira. The possession of a stūpa with a wonder-working relic meant more for a pious Buddhist or Jain than the loss of a province. So Asoka's great political empire crumbled away, while Magadha became known as Vihara (Bihār), the land of monasteries.

The Mauryan dynasty ended ingloriously. The officers of a standing army with the proud traditions of Magadha could not be expected to view with complacency the effects of Asoka's pacifist policy. A military revolt headed by the commander in chief, Pushyamitra, resulted in the death of the last Mauryan emperor, Brihadratha (c. 184 B.C.). Pushyamitra, who was then consecrated as the first of the Sunga line, made a vigorous but ineffectual attempt to stem the tide of invasion. The Sunga dynasty, however, remained in power at Pataliputra for over a century, but little is known of their history except that they numbered ten kings and that Pushyamitra and several of his successors resumed the old Vedic ritual of the Great Horse Sacrifice, which Asoka had forbidden.

When the Sunga dynasty came to a disgraceful end (*circa* 72 B C) it was followed by a Brahman dynasty of four kings known as the Kanvas bringing down the history of Magadha to *circa* 27 B C

Before the end of the Mauryan line the greater part of Southern India had passed over to the rule of the Andhras. Immediately after Asoka's death the chiefs of the Kalingas and Andhras asserted their independence. The Andhras for four and a half centuries played the same rôle in the Telugu country as the Mauryas had done in the Ganges valley. For most of that time they dominated the lands between the Godavari and Krishna rivers from the deltas to the sources. On the west they held Nāsik and the roads to the important harbours of Bharukaccha and Soparā, near Bassem, keeping in check the foreign invaders from the north-west—the Sakas—who were trying to gain a footing in the Deccan. On the east they had a flourishing seaport, Sri Hakulam (Chicacole) at the mouth of the Krishna.

The dynastic history of the period is obscure, but the Āryanisation of the south by no means implied the subjugation of the people by a military despotism. In fact it is from Southern Indian inscriptions that the historian gets the most complete epigraphical record of Indo-Āryan sociology, showing a very even distribution of political responsibility over all sections of the community. Each village (*grama*) country town (*nagama*) or capital city (*pura*) had its well-defined local rights and responsibilities. Their traditional laws had as much authority as king-made laws. It was the recognised duty of kings to see that such local laws were enforced, provided they were not opposed to the general dharma which the royal courts of justice maintained. The economic life of the people was regulated to a great extent by the people themselves through the trade and craft guilds (*srenis*) which were organised as separate villages in the country or as separate wards of a town or city. The beginning of the guild system can be traced, as we have seen, even in the *Rig Veda*. Under

Buddhist and Jain rule the social and political influence of the *śrenis* grew with the wide expansion of commerce. The *Sheths*, or heads of the trade guilds, in important trade centres could command the services of well trained fighting men, also organised as guilds, for the protection of their caravans. They were always the friends and associates of the ruling princes, their sons and daughters married royalty. Sometimes the merchant princes of India themselves assumed the supreme political power in their own districts.

The rule of the Andhras was contemporary with the zenith of the Roman empire, from about 27 B C to A D 180, when Egypt and Syria were under Roman governors. The wealthy Roman aristocracy, indifferent to Eastern religious movements, took a keen interest in the luxuries and curiosities with which India and China could furnish them—the fragrant spices and unguents, silks, fine muslins, brocades and dyed stuffs, pearls and precious stones, birds of gorgeous plumage, monkeys and ferocious beasts which added to the piquancy of gladiatorial shows. Thus every year in July and August, when the winds were favourable, a great mercantile fleet sailed from the Red Sea to the west coast of India and to Ceylon, returning three or four months later with valuable cargoes mostly paid for in Roman gold. This highly lucrative trade was shared by the Andhra, Chera and Pāndya countries. Southern China also sent its silks, jade and precious stones to be re-shipped at the South Indian ports.

Much of this wealth, as inscriptions show, went to the support of the Buddhist and Jain Sanghas. Great kings, rich merchants, and prosperous craft guilds, among which goldsmiths, ivory carvers, carpenters and weavers were prominent, vied with each other in the generosity of the gifts by which relic shrines and monasteries were built and endowed and pleasant retreats provided for the four months of the rainy season when the wandering *bhikkus* met for meditation and discussion. The splendid rock cut chapter house at Kārlī, the largest in India, was excavated at the expense of a merchant

prince of Vajrayanti the capital of the Kadamba dynasty in North and South Canara

Where the pious merchant went the bhikkhu or Brahman generally followed, though the trend of missionary enterprise was more eastwards than westwards. Trade settlements thus formed the beginnings of the great colonies in Sumatra, Java, Siam and Southern China, which expanded into independent Indo Āryan states in the early centuries of the Christian era with the help of Indian princes compelled by various circumstances to take to their ships and seek their fortune abroad. The wandering bhikkhus of the Deccan and Southern India also used the sea ways as much as the land ways. The famous Kanheri caves in the Bombay harbour were provided for the Buddhist friars near one of their landing-places. This was the time when East and West were meeting not only on the land frontiers, but in the market places of India, Egypt and Mesopotamia, in the schools of Alexandria, in the audience halls of the Caesars, and in the palaces of Indian kings who were always ready to enlist skilled craftsmen and fighting men in their service, without regard to race or creed.

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(Dates given follow the *Cambridge History of India*)

| B C        | MAGADHA                        | PERSIA, BAKTRIA, N W INDIA ETC |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| c 612-413. | Saisunaga dynasty, 10<br>kings |                                |
| c 582      | Rajagriha founded              |                                |
| c 563      | Gautama Buddha b <sup>1</sup>  |                                |
| 558        |                                | Cyrus, King of Persia acc      |
| c 554      | Pataliputra founded            |                                |
| 522        |                                | Darius I, King of Persia, acc  |
| 486        |                                | Xerxes, King of Persia acc     |
| c 483      | Gautama Buddha d               |                                |
| 479        |                                | Battle of Plataea              |
| c 468      | Mahavira b <sup>1</sup>        |                                |

<sup>1</sup> These dates are still a matter of controversy. Jain tradition gives 528 B C as the date of Mahavira's death.

| B.C          | MAGADHA                                                                                 | PERSIA, BAKTRIA, N W INDIA, ETC                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| c 413-321    | Nanda dynasty, 9 kings                                                                  |                                                       |
| 336          |                                                                                         | Alexander the Great, King of Macedon                  |
| 333          |                                                                                         | Battle of Issus                                       |
| 330          |                                                                                         | Persepolis burnt death of Darius III                  |
| 327-325      |                                                                                         | <i>Alexander's Indian Campaign</i>                    |
| 323          | —                                                                                       | Death of Alexander                                    |
| c 321 297    | Chandragupta Maurya                                                                     |                                                       |
| 300          |                                                                                         | Seleucus invades India                                |
| c 297        | Bindusara acc                                                                           |                                                       |
| c 274 237    | Asoka                                                                                   |                                                       |
| c 250        |                                                                                         | Baktria and Parthia independent                       |
| c 237        | Dasaratha acc                                                                           |                                                       |
| c 220        |                                                                                         | <i>Andhra Dynasty in S India begins</i>               |
| c 190        |                                                                                         | Demetrius, King of Baktria master in the Indus valley |
| c 184        | Brihadratha killed end of the Mauryan dynasty Pushyamitra acc (Sunga dynasty, 10 kings) |                                                       |
| c 165        |                                                                                         | <i>Yueh Chi begin to move Westwards</i>               |
| c 160        |                                                                                         | Menander attacks Magadha                              |
| c 138        |                                                                                         | Parthian conquest of Taksha sila                      |
| c 126        |                                                                                         | Yueh Chi expel the Sakas from Baktria.                |
| c. 75-A D 50 |                                                                                         | Sakas and Pahlavas (Parthians) supreme in the Punjab  |
| c 73         | Vasudeva acc (Kanva dynasty, 4 kings)                                                   |                                                       |
| c 58         | <i>Malava or Vikrama Era begins</i>                                                     | <i>Azes I Saka king acc</i>                           |
| c 27         | End of Kanva dynasty                                                                    |                                                       |



## CHAPTER V

THIRD GREEK INVASION—THE BAKTRIAN GREEKS IN INDIA—  
GROWTH OF INDIAN THEISM—PATANJALI—MAHAYANA  
BUDDHISM—PARTHIAN SAKA AND KUSHAN DYNASTIES—  
REVIVAL OF BRAHMANISM—CODE OF MANU

IN Hindustan or India north of the Vindhya's political interest after Asoka's death returns again to Taksha silā and the Punjab. About 190 B.C. a third Greek invasion came through the Kabul valley, led by Demetrius King of Bactria son in law of Antiochus the Great. The Bactrian Greeks for nearly a century remained in possession of Taksha silā and the Indus valley. One of their kings Menander or Milinda, a military Buddhist, even attempting to emulate Alexander by attacking Magadha. But Pushyamitra, the Sunga king upon whom the mantle of Chandragupta had fallen repulsed the invader and celebrated his victory in Vedic fashion with the Great Horse Sacrifice.

How far the cultured Bactrian Greeks influenced the school of Taksha silā which continued to flourish until the city was sacked by the Huns in A.D. 485, there is little evidence except that of Greek craftsmen who with great fluency but little spiritual comprehension tried to interpret the mythology and mysticism of Buddhism in their own rationalistic Greek fashion. Probably Greek knowledge contributed to the school of medicine for which Taksha silā was renowned, and the famous Indian astronomical school at Ujjain may have owed something to the Greeks at Taksha silā.

But in religion and metaphysics the Greeks came under the spell of India, even though Taksha silā kept open house for students of all religions. The Magis and Zoroastrians of Persia, Buddhists of many different sects, followers of Mitra, Siva, of Vishnu or Vasudeva and Christian missionaries found a hearing there. In this atmosphere of free thought

which was by no means confined to Taksha śilā, the Buddhism of the schools gradually diverged widely from that of the primitive Buddhist Church. Partly through Asoka's popular propaganda and partly through the mystical interpretation of Gautama's psychological analysis by the schools, the teaching of Buddhism was profoundly affected by the theistic thought of the time. Among the uneducated masses the belief in the divinity of the Buddha had taken deep root long before Asoka's time. The cult of relic worship had done much to make it a general article of faith, and the growing influence of other theistic doctrines made itself strongly felt in the chapter houses of the Sangha. Brahman scholarship, which had been stimulated rather than suppressed by the spread of Gautama's teaching, found a notable exponent about the second or third century B.C. in Patañjali, the Sanskrit grammarian, who in his *Yoga sūtras* systematised the practice of mental concentration, which under the name of *dhyāna* had been adapted to Buddhist ritual, upon a theistic basis. Another significant sign of the times was the growing influence of theistic ideas put forward in the *Mahābhārata*. About 140 B.C. a Greek envoy, Heliodoros, sent by the Greek king of Taksha śilā, Antialcidas, to the king of Vidishā in Central India, raised an inscribed column in honour of Vasudeva or Vishnu. In this cult Krishna, the hero of the *Mahābhārata*, is represented as an incarnation of the Supreme Deity, Vishnu, and worship by *bhakti-marga*, the path of devotion, is enjoined as an alternative to the path of knowledge.

The ultimate effect of this state of spiritual ferment was that, while Asoka's ethical code continued to serve as the groundwork of Indian religious teaching, Buddhism itself split up into two main schools, one was called the Mahāyāna, or the Great Vehicle which transported the traveller along the road to Nirvāṇa, the other the Hīnayāna, the Little Vehicle. In both schools the Buddha was recognised as a divinity. But while the Hīnayānist adhered closely to the early Buddhist texts and aimed at reaching Nirvāṇa by his own spiritual

exertions—following the *sādhana* or spiritual discipline prescribed by his divine Master *Sikṣamuni*—the Mahāvīnist explained the historical Buddha as one and not the chief of the many manifestations of the spiritual essence (*Harma-dhatu*) which pervaded all space. He was satisfied if by the grace of the particular Bodhisattva he adored he could be re-born in a higher spiritual sphere. The ultimate aim of the Mahāvīnist was to become a Bodhisattva himself, but this great desire could not be fulfilled in a single lifetime—only through many thousands of rebirths. The Mahāvīnist, therefore, in his spiritual quest did not attach so much importance to celibacy and asceticism but more to winning the favour, through single minded devotion (*bhakti*) of the Great Beings who ruled the different spiritual planes.<sup>1</sup>

Great political disturbances broke in from time to time upon these religious controversies, and eventually opened the way to the spread of Buddhism into Northern China overland. The Greeks, under two rival dynasties, ruled the Punjab from circ 190 to 130 B.C. Then Bactria and the kingdom of Takhsasila were annexed by the Parthians, whose mounted archers later on were more than a match for the Roman legionaries. Next the Sakas or Scythians, tribes forming the Parthian province of Sakasthān (Seistan) assumed the sovereignty at Takhsasila, for a time, apparently, under Parthian suzerainty. Several Saka kings, beginning with Maues circ 75 B.C., ruled in the Punjab, one of them, Azes I, extending his power as far as Mathurā on the Jumna. The Sakas also settled in Surāshtra, or Kāthiawār, from whence they made ineffectual efforts to penetrate into the Deccan.

In the meantime all the Hellenic settlements in Iran felt the impact of the westward drift of the more or less civilised

<sup>1</sup> It seems almost as if the neo-Buddhists under the influence of Brahmanical thought deified the different moral and intellectual qualities of the Buddha's psychological analysis as benign or malignant spirits in the same way as the Vedic Āryans had deified the phenomena of nature. Thus Infinite Pity became the Lord Avalokiteshvara, Infinite Wisdom Manjushri etc.

nomad horsemen pushed out of the Mongolian steppes by the consolidation and extension of the Chinese empire under Shi Hwang Ti, who was followed by the powerful rulers of the Han dynasty. About 149 B.C. the vanguard of the nomads composed of some tribes called the Yueh Chi crossed the Pamir plateau. After driving some of the Saka tribes southwards they were turned in the same direction by pressure of the nomads in their rear. They then settled for a time in the valley of the Oxus, the Scythians or Parthians they displaced moving towards the Indian frontier. Bactria which had been annexed by Mithridates I of Parthia, *circa* 139 B.C., was soon overrun by the Yueh Chi whose petty chieftains gradually adapted themselves to their new environment adopted Graeco-Bactrian culture, and thereby came under the influence of Buddhism. The beginning of the Christian era found the Yueh Chi a powerful nation disputing for the empire of Western Asia with the Parthians, who were beginning to split up into a number of petty principalities. The reign of the last Parthian ruler at Takhsasila, Gondophares, *circa* A.D. 19-60 is memorable in Christian annals for the mission of St. Thomas the Apostle. A legend declares that he suffered martyrdom there, but there is no good evidence that the barbarities of the Roman capital, which must have set many such rumours afloat in the Christian world, were imitated in Buddhist lands before the Hun invasions of the fifth century.

About A.D. 40 the Yueh Chi were united under the chieftains of the Kushān tribe. Kujula Kadphises, known as Kadphises I. He came down the Kabul valley and annexed Gandhāra and Takhsasila sweeping away the last traces of Greek and Parthian dominion on the Indian frontier. His son, Wima Kadphises or Kadphises II, found it easy to extend his conquests in politically disorganised Northern India, where he exacted tribute from the Saka princes in Mālwa and pushed up the Ganges valley as far as Benares. But he was no match for the great Chinese general Pan Chao, who about this time

made a brilliant thrust across Central Asia right up to the shores of the Caspian. After a disastrous defeat on the plains of Kashgar Kadphises had to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Chinese emperor.

The height of the Kushan power was reached under the warlike Kanishka, who spent a great part of his reign of over forty years in fighting chiefly with the Chinese and Parthians. To Afghanistan and Bokhara which had formed the nucleus of the Kushan empire he added a strip of Western Persia. He also annexed Kashmir and from his capital at Purushapura (Peshawar) ruled over the greater part of Northern India, as far east as Pataliputra. His greatest victories were in Chinese Turkestan where Kadphises II had been defeated. He took tribute from Khotan, Yarkand and Kashgar, but doubtless received the greater part of his revenue from his rich Indian provinces.

While the Kushan empire was growing Buddhism was also adding to its conquests. Gandhara with Purushapura and Takhsasila as its centres, became like Bihār, a land of monasteries. The countryside teemed with legends of Asoka's life and of miracles wrought by Bodhisattvas or by relics of the saints. The Chinese armies made the northern land routes safe for caravans and in A.D. 67 news of the Good Law reached the Chinese emperor, Ming Ti, who sent envoys to Khotan where Indian Buddhist monasteries were already established. From that time the demand for Buddhist texts, images, pictures and relics brought North-western India and China into close intercourse. Chinese literati went to study in the schools of India and Indian pandits went to teach in China. The Kushan monarchs had no reason to interfere with this Chinese caravan traffic, for the tolls on Chinese costly silks, jade and fine lacquer went to swell the profits they derived from the lucrative caravan trade between India and the Mediterranean, to facilitate which they minted gold coins in imitation of the Roman aureus.

Kanishka, following the Indo-Aryan tradition, patronised

devotees of many different cults but showed special interest in Buddhism. He summoned to Kashmir another great council of the Sangha to re-establish the Buddhist canon. Its decisions in the form of commentaries on the Buddhist scriptures were engraved on copper plates and deposited in a stūpa built near Srinagar.<sup>1</sup>

Medical science seems also to have made progress in his reign. Charaka, an authority much quoted by later Arabic writers, is said to have been Kanishka's court physician.

The extent to which Brahman thought was penetrating into the growth of Buddhism is shown in the gradual Sanskritising of its old literary language, Pali, which comes into evidence after the first century A.D. With the spread of Mahāyāna doctrines, of which the Brahman Nagarjuna was a famous protagonist in the second or third century A.D., Sanskrit came to be used by northern Buddhists both in their texts and in oral disputations until finally by the time of the Muhammadan conquest Sanskrit, according to Professor Macdonell, was almost the only written language of Indian literature. The change in the form of expression connoted a subtle change in thought. When the Mahāyānists restated the doctrines of the Buddha in terms of their mystic philosophy they gave away the logical position of the Great Teacher and prepared the way for a religious reaction in favour of orthodox Brahmanism which was accelerated by the trend of political events.

An important Sanskrit historical document, the *Mānava dharma śāstra*, commonly known as the Code of Manu, is now generally attributed to the later Kushān period, or about the third century A.D. It seems to have been compiled by a Brahman of Magadha in view of the frequent admission of foreign intruders into the inner circles of Brahmanism, to re-affirm the position of his caste fellows who remained faithful to Vedic sacrificial traditions and to the theistic teachings of the Upanishads. The Brahmanical theory of dharma implied

<sup>1</sup> The exact site of the stupa has not been identified and the Chinese translations of the commentaries have not yet been edited.

that spiritual enfranchisement, considered as the highest aim of existence, could not be won by individual effort until through a long series of re births in different spheres of life both mind and body had attained to the highest possible degree of purity, by breeding, by diet by mode of life and mental training and by the due performance of Sādhana. Dharma from this point of view was a divinely inspired ordering of the human family by which the older or more developed souls helped the younger ones along the paths of spiritual evolution. To the Indian mind there was no injustice in the Brahman's claim to social and intellectual superiority, since every one's place in society was determined by the merit or demerit of former lives. Brahman and Sūdra alike suffered the penalty of neglect of dharma. If dharma were not maintained the human race missed its highest aim and the social fabric fell to pieces. "All classes would become corrupt, all barriers would be broken down, there would be total confusion among men"—a state of things which Manu seems to imply existed in his own time, for he advises Brahmins to avoid the cities ruled by Sūdras or where heretics and outcasts were in the majority. His regulations, though pointing to closer caste restrictions, bear the impress of Buddhist and Jain thought in their great respect for animal life. Soma, the spirituous drink which played so great a part in ancient Vedic ritual, is not mentioned.

Kanishka came to a violent end *circa* A.D. 120, after a reign of over forty years. Some of his officers, it is said, tired of his ceaseless campaigning smothered him in his bed. Huvishka, his successor, beyond rebuilding the shrine which Asoka had raised in honour of the Bodhi tree at Gāyā, left nothing but his coins to distinguish his reign. The terrible pestilence which devastated China and Europe for a long period must have been felt in the Kushān dominions about this time. During the reign of Huvishka's successor, Vasudeva, who assumed the name of an orthodox Hindu monarch, the Yüeh Chi power declined. From A.D. 226 the Sassanian dynasty of Persia, which held the religion of Zoroaster, began to revive

the national ideals of Iran. A century later a similar movement began in Āryāvarta under the Gupta dynasty.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

NORTH WEST WESTERN AND SOUTHERN INDIA *circa* A.D. 1900

A.D.

- c 19-48 Gondopharnes (Parthian) King at Taksha sila
- c 50 (Kujula) Kadphises I Kushan king (Great Yueh chü) rules in Baktria the upper Kabul valley and Kandahar
- c 64 (Wima) Kadphises II King of Taksha sila.
- c 78 Saka era begins  
Kanishka (Little Yueh chü) acc. Kushan empire extends over N.W. India
- c 128 Rudradaman I (Saka) Great Satrap of Ujjain and Malabarashtra under Kushan suzerainty
- c 128 Huviska Kushan emperor acc.
- c 173-202 Gautamiputra Yajna Sri Andhra king
- c 182-200 Vasudeva Kushan emperor the Kushan power declines
- c 220 End of the Andhra dynasty
- 226 Sassanian dynasty of Persia founded by Ardashur or Artaxerxes I

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SYMBOLIC FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN ART

THE preceding chapters in their bare outlines indicate that the religious, social and political history of India from the first appearance of the Vedic Āryans was not the fortuitous effect of a long series of accidents. It was to a large extent determined by a definite line of thought, a deeply considered plan of social life which after being shaped and adjusted by the experience of many generations was at last established upon so solid a foundation that changes of dynasty hardly affected it. Internal wars and foreign invasions were not able to destroy it. From time to time some great thinker appeared to el



the intellectual atmosphere and reawaken the public conscience. Thought was under no restraint of law or custom, and before Muhammadan times it was the thinker rather than the fighting man who ruled India.

The philosophy of the schools was a part of the education of the ruling class and not a barren intellectual pastime. It gave inspiration not only to the religious teacher and the statesman but to the poet, artist and craftsman. The *Silpa sastras*, the canonical books of the Indian artist and crafts-



FIG. 5—Siva's Hermitage Mt. Kailasa

*From a Photograph*

man give clear indications of inspiration from this source. The building of houses and the planning of villages and towns were sacrificial rites in which the well being of the whole community was involved. The master builder was a public servant like the sacrificing priest. *Manu* ostracises speculative builders, together with priests who make money out of image worship and unlearned Brahmins. Auspicious sites for villages and towns were those in which the soil was clean and good for cultivation and where good water for both drinking and bathing was plentiful. The *Āryan* gods, who were essentially health gods, loved to dwell in such places and the careful

orientation of the detailed plans given in the *Silpa sūtras* distinctly connects them with Vedic ritual. The needs of different classes of the community were considered: thus while there are special plans for Brahman villages there is also an abode of bliss—a miniature *Āryavarta* in which five different classes including Brahmins could live a well ordered life together. Of the art of Vedic times there is unfortunately hardly any record except the literary tradition. The builder, as we have seen, worked chiefly in wood, the material which contained the sacred fire element. The wood



FIG. 6.—The Kalsi rock-cut Temple at Ellora

worker therefore had high sacrificial functions and his craft was a pure one. Sculptors carved the sacrificial posts, but as the Devas themselves came when bidden to the feast it was foolish, said the Rishis, to mock the divine Presence with a graven image. Early Buddhist teaching, being opposed to all Vedic sacrifices, had no prejudices for or against the materials used by craftsmen, but it kept up the Vedic tradition in representing the story of the Master's life. His personality, which existed no more except in his teaching, was represented by symbols. The chief one, which stood for his life work, the teaching of dharma, was the stupa, a simple memorial or reliquary, which gave no scope for the sculptor's imagination. Asoka's craftsmen only made it as strong and solid as brick or

stone could make it. The strict rules of the Order forbade elaborate decoration, but the lavish endowments of royalty, the generosity of merchants and the pious emulation of the craft guilds were not to be restrained. The chapter houses of the Sangha soon became as stately as the audience halls of kings. The gateways of a great stūpa were like the entrances of a royal city. The abbots of the famous monasteries disposed of princely revenues and were treated with more than royal dignity.

In this brief survey it will only be possible to indicate how one central idea finds expression in some of the principal forms of Indian art. Just as the Christian or Muhammadan has one place in his mind in which all sectarian differences meet, there is one spot to which, from Vedic times to the present day, all Indian thought has converged. Whether it is the peasant praying to the holy river which gives him his daily food and purifies body and soul, or the philosopher meditating on the Great Thinker who sets the worlds in motion, his thoughts turn to the Himālayas and to the "seed vessel of the World Lotus." There the pilgrim finds the source of the sacred stream joined with the celestial Ganges by the slopes of the mystic Mt Meru. The worshipper of Śiva sees the cell of the divine Hermit of Kailasa, the Buddhist the image of the Lord Buddha addressing his disciples.<sup>1</sup> The Christian sādhu, likewise, finds it a place fit for meditation. Holding in its heart the precious fount, the jar churned by the Devas from the Ocean, upon whose perennial flow millions of human lives depend, the Himālayan Lotus has been and still is the throne of all the Devas.

It is in such profound and universal emotions planted by Nature in a people's soul rather than in the record of dynasties and political coincidences that one must look for the inspiration of a traditional art. The design of the carved pillar typical of Mauryan times and the prototype from which nearly all Indian temple pillars are derived is evidently an architect-

<sup>1</sup> Ekāi Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, p. 141.

onic adaptation of the idea of India as the stalk of the Himalayan World Lotus<sup>1</sup>. It is most clearly indicated in the numerous representations of buildings carved upon the gateways and railings of the Sānchi and Bhārhut stūpas. The pillars of the Kārli chapter house are typical examples. Asoka's splendid lats or inscribed pillars, with which he as Chakravartin marked the holy places and proclaimed the world dominion of the Dharma, are Hellenistic adaptations of the same idea, for his Baktrian or Persian masons, like the Kushān sculptors of later times, translated Indian ideas into a foreign tongue, often without understanding them.

In this Indian order of architecture the shaft of the column or pillar stands for the stalk of the Lotus—Āryāvarta or India itself, recognised in Mauryan times as a geographical and political unity. Sometimes, as at Kārli, it is stepped into a water jar—a symbol of the Indian Ocean<sup>2</sup>. The capital (Fig. 7) is formed by the "seed vessel of the Lotus"<sup>3</sup> and by the petals of the flower turned down upon the stalk, as they are frequently rendered in contemporary decorative motives. These petals form the so called "bell shaped" member, which may be taken to symbolise the Himālayān slopes<sup>4</sup>. Above the capital Asoka placed the symbols of the Dharma, like a banner waving triumphantly over the roof of the world. At Kārli one sees instead later Buddhist ideas of the heavenly spheres—sculptured figures of divinities riding their elephants—the rain clouds—raised upon an altar or throne over the 'seed vessel of the Lotus'.

In the famous Asoka pillar, erected at the spot where the

<sup>1</sup> There was the same idea in Egyptian art. Upper Egypt, with the sources of the Nile, was represented by a lotus flower. Lower Egypt by a papyrus reed.

<sup>2</sup> As in most art the symbolism grew out of practical necessities. The jar was originally a protection for the foot of a wooden post against damp and white ants.

<sup>3</sup> The "lotus" fruit here represented is that of the white or blue lotus.

<sup>4</sup> The ancient geographical symbolism is given a mystic interpretation in the Mahāmāyāna Tantra.

Buddha began to preach at Sārnāth, the Persian or Baktrian sculptors not understanding Indian vernacular art, reduced the principal member of the capital, the seed vessel of the lotus to an insignificant ovolo moulding. But on the abacus

above it, instructed no doubt by their Buddhist teachers, they carved in high relief the animal symbols of the four 'gates' of the Manasarovara lake—the lion, elephant, horse and bull—to represent the holy rivers of the 'four petalled World-Lotus' flowing east, west, north and south. In the Kārī capital (Fig 7) the same idea is symbolised by enclosing the seed vessel of the Lotus in a quadrangular shrine open on all four sides.

The same symbolism repeats itself in the design of Hindu temples. Before Buddhist times and for a long time afterwards, there were no permanent structures for the performance of tribal sacrifices. The Devas had built for themselves a wondrous shrine up in the eternal snows. Āryavarta, their holy land, was the forecourt, the mandapam of the temple.

<sup>1</sup> This symbolism appears on the great map of the region prepared by order of the Chinese emperor Chuen Lung (Sven Hedin *Southern Tibet* vol 1 p 19 n)

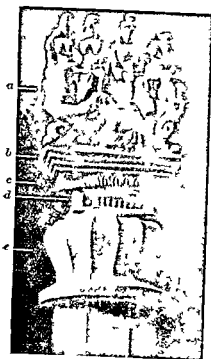


FIG 7—Capital from the Chapter House at Kārī

- a Devas b Altar c Upturned Lotus Petals  
d Seed vessel of Lotus enclosed in Shrine  
e, Down turned Petals of Lotus.

the marks of the Hellenistic technical tradition survive. His thoughts turned at once to the slabs carved by Visvakarma the divine craftsman on the snow peaks of Kailasa which Indian pilgrims for untold generations had worshipped. He

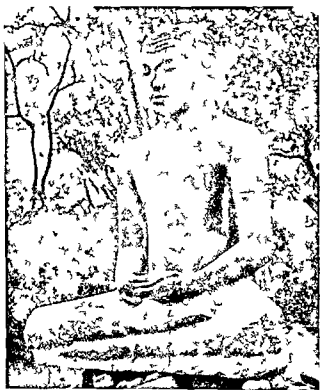


FIG. 9.—Stone Image of Buddha at Anuradhapura Ceylon

saw in his mystic reveries not the Salayan monk who won Nirvana under the Bodhi tree at Gaya but one of the divine Buddhas throned on the lotus flower of earth and heaven who control the Dharma of the universe and send from time to time a Messenger an emanation of themselves to show mankind the Path.

In this conception which is finely illustrated in the famous

Buddha in age of Anuradhapura (Fig 9), Buddhist and Brahman thought merge into the same artistic ideal. Buddha is recognised as Siva and Siva as Buddha, just as they are by the pilgrims who come to worship at Kailāsa. The ethereal transcendental body "like a lion,"<sup>1</sup> with broad shoulders and narrow waist, with which Indian art endows all the Buddhas



FIG 10—SIVA as Nātārāja  
(Bronze in the Madras Museum)

and Devas, as well as those human beings who through yoga or bhakti have attained to union with the divine, must not be taken literally to represent a man-lion, like the gods of Egypt. The yogi or bhakta must be lion hearted because, like Prahlāda in the story of the *Mahābhārata*, he must be prepared to suffer for the truth. he must be strong in body to keep his mind in health, so that he may wield the sword of knowledge rightly;

<sup>1</sup> See *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the Author.

he must keep his body pure and free from evil thoughts so as to guard the precious jewel of reason which God has given him. Through yoga or bhakti the physical body becomes purer, finer, less gross. Thus Indian art expresses the profound influence of mind over body in the study of which modern science is deeply interested.

In Southern India Brahmanism it seems, was later than in the north to popularise its metaphysics in iconic symbols. When it did so, though the shrine itself was a representation of the Kailasa Hermit's Cell (Fig. 5), the image of Siva as Ruler of the universe assumed another form inspired by the local environ-

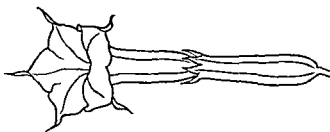


FIG. 11 — Flower of *Datura alba*

ment. The slopes of the Western Ghats, the holy mountains of the south, form as it were the bathing steps of the Indian Ocean. On these steps the Brahman had continually before his eyes not the moonlit snow peaks, symbols of Nature's meditative moods, but the wide expanse of ocean beating in ceaseless rhythm as the quivering sun at even sank slowly into its depths. Here Nature was the symbol of the universal dance which the Devas danced at the sacrificial feast (*Rig Veda* x 72. 6). Siva appeared in the glory of the setting sun as Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance (Fig. 10).

In Southern India also another and a more accurate symbol is used for the great mountain ranges of the north. In the *Vayu Purana*<sup>1</sup> they are likened to the trumpet-shaped flower

<sup>1</sup> The *Vayu Purana* probably represents Hindu geographical knowledge of the Gupta period or the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.



of the datura plant (Fig 11), instead of to the lotus. The bracket capitals supporting the roofs of temple mandapams—as the Himālayas seem to support the heavens—are nearly always in Southern India carved with a conventional datura flower instead of a lotus. Fig 12 shows the same motive applied to the gargoyle which carries off the water used for the ritualistic bathing of a temple image—the ceremony which symbolises the outflow of the sacred rivers from Śiva's Himālayan shrine.

A reference to the diagram on p 14, which shows the whole

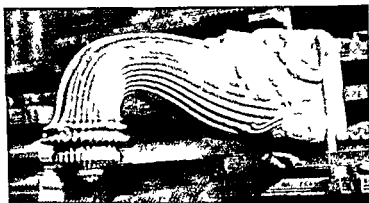


FIG 12—Temple Gargoyle based on Datura Flower

Tibetan plateau and the adjoining mountains, including those which twist southwards to form the watershed of the great rivers of Burma, will give the impression that the geography of the Purāṇas is not so wild as is usually supposed. The general shape of the plateau with the adjoining Burmese mountains is very suggestive of the form of the datura flower. The resemblance is still more striking if one assumes that the simile was not intended for the whole Tibetan plateau, but only for the great water channels formed by the Himālayan mountain ranges together with their eastern and western outlets.

## CHAPTER XII

THE CENTRAL ASIAN NOMADS—THE GUPTA DYNASTY—GUPTA LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART—COLONISATION—FA HSIEN'S VISIT TO INDIA—THE HUN INVASIONS

WHILE the Kushān power was waning a strong dynasty in Persia, the Sassanids, turned for a time the main stream of the Hun nomads away from the frontiers of India. Early in the fourth century A.D. another Chandragupta, a Rājā of obscure lineage, who by marriage with a Licchavi princess had allied himself with one of the most aristocratic clans of Madhyadeśa, proclaimed a holy war to restore the Kshatriya ideals of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*. The year A.D. 320, when Chandragupta was consecrated as the first of the Gupta line, was the beginning of a new era in which the Brahmans, with their intellectual weapons sharpened and improved by the long contest with Buddhist and Jain reformers, took the lead as popular teachers.

Though India remained free from foreign invasions for about a century and a half, the Gupta position as sovereign lords of Āryāvarta never at any time rested on such substantial military achievements as those of the Mauryan line. The second Gupta, Samudragupta (c. 330), won a nominal suzerainty over the Deccan by a brilliant military pageant, accompanied in Vedic style with the Sacrificial Horse, through the country sanctified by Rāma's epic adventures. His son, Chandragupta II (c. 375-413), added greatly to his revenues and prestige by recovering the provinces of Mālāvā, Gujarāt and Surāshtra or Kāthiāwār, where foreign dynasties<sup>1</sup> for several centuries had appropriated the tolls of the western sea-ports, Bharōch, Sopāra and Cambay. The Gupta treasury

<sup>1</sup> Saka kings calling themselves the Great Satraps of Maharashtra and Ujjain.

was full to overflowing with the tribute of many Rājās and the towns of Magadha were rich and prosperous, but the Gupta empire never restored to Āryāvarta its natural mountain frontier. When the marauding hordes from Central Asia resumed their march the gates of the Punjab stood open.

But while the western world was relapsing into political chaos and intellectual torpor, Pātaliputra, Ujjain, Ayodhyā and other Indian royal cities flourished under refined and cultured rulers who were enthusiastic patrons of all kinds of learning. Samudragupta was more proud of his musical accomplishments than of his victories in war. He appears on one of his coins playing the *vinā* (lute) both he and his son, Chandragupta II, were, like many other Indian kings, poets and men of letters. And even after the fall of the Gupta dynasty the schools of India kept the light burning which was partly extinguished in Europe when Justinian closed the schools of Athens. From A.D. 300 to 800 not only were the previous foundations of religious belief re-examined and placed upon a definitely theistic or pantheistic basis by many Vedic scholars so that the agnosticism of early Buddhist teaching was gradually discredited in all the debating halls of India. The *Mahābhārata* with the *Bhagavad Gītā*, perhaps re-edited and enlarged, was established by Brahman teachers as a comprehensive text book of religion, morals and social science for all classes of Hindus. The path of learning was kept in good order by Sanskrit grammarians and lexicographers. The people of the great towns through familiarity with the epics and the masterpieces of the Sanskrit drama, were sufficiently educated to follow the language of the literati. Kālidāsa, the famous poet and dramatist, is believed to have lived in the time of Chandragupta II and his successor Bhavabhūti, author of *Mālati mādhava* and other classical dramas, enjoyed the patronage of Yasovarman, king of Kanauj, in the beginning of the eighth century, and later on of Lalitāditya of Kashmir.

No inconsiderable part of the foundations of modern

western science were laid in the stores of knowledge accumulated by the Sanskrit literature of this period which were later on transmitted to Europe by Arabic scholars Aryabhatī of Pataliputra (b. A.D. 476) Varāhamihira of Ujjain who worked from A.D. 505 to 587 and Brahmagupta (b. 598) were in their own days the foremost astronomers and mathematicians of the world. Among the arithmetical and mathematical symbols and methods borrowed by the Arabs from India were the so-called Arabic numerals, the decimal system of notation, the sines and versed sines. Algebra was an Indian rather than an Arabic science. Also in medicine and surgery, physics and astronomy, the Arab schools borrowed from India, though they went further in some directions. The great schools of architecture, sculpture, painting and metal work connected with the Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries of this period are owing to the iconoclasm of Islam only meagrely represented in Indian monuments now extant. But the works which survive, the Chapter Houses XVI and XVII at Ajantā, the magnificent frescoes of the first monastic hall, the Viśvakarmā Hall at Ellora (probably the guild hall of the masons working there), the sculptures of the great temple at Elephanta, the colossal copper image of the Buddha as the Teacher (now in the Birmingham Art Museum)<sup>1</sup> are among the most splendid achievements of Indian art. The technical skill of the time is shown in the great iron pillar of Samudragupta, now standing in Kutb ud Din's mosque at Delhi, welded together in sections so cunningly that until recently it was believed to be of cast metal. Nor were Indian armourers, goldsmiths, weavers and dyers behind this high level of achievement in their respective crafts. Their descendants of the eleventh century, sold in the slave markets of Afghanistan, furnished much of the wonderful craftsmanship of the workshops of Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus and Samarkand, which has made the reputation of Islam in the art museums of modern Europe.

<sup>1</sup> See *Handbook of Indian Art* by the Author.

The great commercial activity of Gupta times, as well as the forced migration of ruling families by the fortune of war, helped the spread of Indian culture overseas. In spite of the many dangers both from bad weather and pirates the sea ways were much frequented by merchants and pilgrims. Ships with crews of 200 men sailed the open sea to Sumatra and Java and thence to Kambodia, voyages which might last for three months from port to port. The sea was often the best way of escape for a ruling dynasty after a disastrous fight: a predatory chieftain who found the land ways unhealthy might have better luck as a sea rover.<sup>1</sup> About the fifth century A.D. an Indian dynasty of Kshatriya origin established itself in Kambodia, where immigrants from the east coast of India had begun to arrive before the Christian era. The colonisation of Sumatra and Java no doubt preceded these excursions to the Far East. Inscriptions found in the highlands of Sumatra point to the existence of a powerful Hindu kingdom there in the seventh century A.D.

The Chinese have preserved very important and interesting historical documents of the fifth and seventh centuries in the records of Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang, two of the many pilgrims who went from China to study in the schools of India. Fa Hien's object was to procure the text of the Vinaya Pitaka, the Buddhist monastic rules. He with several companions, was six years on the road to Takshasila: besides visiting all the sacred places in the north west and in Magadha he spent three years in a monastery at Pataliputra and two at the great seaport Tāmralipti or Tamliuk, whence he sailed to Ceylon. His visit was from about 401 to 410, the time of Chandragupta II and before the devastating Hun invasions. He was much impressed by the facilities for travellers, the good rest houses and free hospitals, by the learning and strict discipline of the

<sup>1</sup> Marco Polo found that piracy on the Indian seas was a profession or sport in which due consideration was shown to its victims if they observed the rules of the game. The theory of dharma was applied to all sorts and conditions of men.

monasteries of Magadha and by the general prosperity and good government of the country Asoka's rule of perfect tolerance for all religious sects was maintained Brahman pandits taught the doctrines of Buddhism and different sects lived together peacefully in the same monastery But caste rules were strictly observed even by good Buddhists It was incumbent on a Brahman teacher of Mahavana doctrines to take a bath if his caste purity were vitiated as it might be by a king's salutation Chandalas the aborigines outside the Āryan pale if they entered a town or market place had to strike a piece of wood to warn the pure who came near them Taxes were light and the people were not harassed by officialdom \*They have not to register their households or attend to any magistrates and rules The criminal law was much less severe than it was in Mauryan times Capital punishment was unknown only dangerous brigands or rebels suffered amputation of the right hand

Fa Hien also tells us that the people of Northern India drank no wine or spirits and were strict vegetarians— they do not keep pigs or fowls there are no dealings in cattle no butchers shops or distilleries in their market places The statement must be taken *cum grano salis* Buddhist ethics had no doubt profoundly influenced popular habits and the sacrificial ritual of the Brahmans but one cannot believe that the whole country side especially at a time when Vedic Brahmanism was rapidly recovering its authority preserved the atmosphere of a Buddhist monastery At Pataliputra the Gupta capital the whole city including the Brahmans made holiday at the great Buddhist festivals Here and at other places the bhikkus were treated with the highest respect Their monasteries were splendidly built and had beautifully laid out gardens with pleasant groves fruit trees flowers and lotus pools for the Buddhists were keen horticulturists though according to the strict law of the Buddha they were forbidden either to dig the ground or have it dug<sup>1</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> Patimokkha p 33 vol xi: S.B.E

other hand some of the most sacred places, Gayā and Kapilā vastu, were deserted and had become the haunts of wild beasts. Another significant indication of the waning influence of Buddhism in India lay in a fact not mentioned by Fa Hien, that during his visit the head of the Sangha in Western India, Kumārajīva, left the country and took up residence in the Court of the Chinese emperor, Yao Tsing. Before Huen Tsing reached India a considerable Buddhist colony was established in Southern China, and in 526 Bodhidharma, the twenty eighth patriarch in succession to the Buddha, removed his seat to Canton. In Huen Tsang's time the Sangha enjoyed the patronage of the most powerful ruler in Āryāvarta, Harsha Vardhana, but the departure of its spiritual head must have weakened its popular influence considerably.

Great political events took place in the interval between the visits of the two Chinese pilgrims. About fifty years after Fa Hien's departure the nomads of the Central Asian steppes made another great push westwards, and a section of them, known as the White Huns or Ephthalites, distinguished from the Yuch Chi by the unbridled ferocity of their chieftains, drove a wedge into the Sassanid empire, which for some time had been India's bulwark against the Turanian hordes. Both Persia and the Kushān Kingdom of Kābul gradually succumbed to the attack. Skandagupta repulsed the nomad vanguard which came down the north western passes, but his successors, about A.D. 500, had to yield considerable territory, including the rich province of Mālwa, to Toramana, an Ephthalite chieftain. The breakdown of the Gupta military strength again split up Āryāvarta into a patchwork of bickering principalities, while swarms of Central Asian tribes poured down unchecked into the Indus valley.

The revolting barbarities of Toramāna's son, Mihiragula, who massacred Buddhist monks and nuns wholesale and amused himself by throwing elephants over precipices, at last forced the Indian princes to make common cause against his tyranny.

About 528 Mihiragula was defeated and taken prisoner by Yasodharman Raja of Malwā and the Gupta Narasimha Baladitya but he was allowed to take refuge in Kashmir, where he abused the hospitality of the Court and with his Hun retinue continued his murderous debauches until his death some years afterwards

## CHAPTER XIII

HARSHA VARDHANA (606-647)—HIUEN TSANG'S ACCOUNT OF INDIA—BEGINNING OF THE MUHAMMADAN ERA

WHEN Hiuén Tsang a young but learned Chinese doctor of the Law, crossed Central Asia about a century later he found that the Turks had driven their Hun kinsmen off the path and Northern India was enjoying a respite both from foreign invasions and from internal political strife. Pataliputra was mostly in ruins. The Gupta dynasty had sunk into obscurity. A chivalrous and accomplished young monarch Harsha Vardhana (606-647) after five and a half years' hard fighting, had established himself at Kanauj a great trading and strategic centre on the Ganges as Lord Paramount of the Five Indies. At Harsha's Court a brilliant throng of philosophers, poets, dramatists and artists shared the distinction which he had won both with his pen and his sword<sup>1</sup>. His father Prabhakara Rājā of Thaneshvar had waged successful war against the Huns, the Raja of Gandhara and other interlopers like the Gurjaras, who had profited by the unsettled state of the Indian borderlands. Harsha, coming to the throne when he was a youth of sixteen had, with greatly augmented military forces, brought the greater part of Northern India under his suzerainty, but failed

<sup>1</sup> He wrote a treatise on Sanskrit grammar. His poems set to music by himself were popular songs in Northern India and he is credited with the authorship of two classical Sanskrit plays the *Ratnavali* and *Nagananda*.



an attempt to subdue his rival south of the Vindhyas, Pulakesin II, of the Western Chalukyan line

Hsuen Tsang was not disappointed with the land of the Crescent Moon, or of True Knowledge,<sup>1</sup> as it was called by pious Buddhists. The teaching of the monasteries was singularly free from sectarian bias. At Nālanda, where he studied the Brahmanical science of Yoga, many schools of Buddhist philosophy, Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, were represented. The Vedas including medicine and mathematics, were taught. The immense building enterprises of the Saṅgha, the sumptuous decoration of the monasteries and the great demand for images of gold, silver and copper had brought the arts and crafts to a high state of perfection. The monks encouraged horticulture and agriculture, the finest fruits and choice kinds of rice being grown for the abbots and their distinguished guests. Hsuen Tsang had sometimes to complain of the people's rudeness and bad ways, the monks he met were sometimes bigoted and quarrelsome, sometimes idle and dissolute. But for the teaching and conduct of Nalanda he had only the highest praise. Admirable discipline was maintained among the ten thousand scholars and teachers supported by its rich endowments. The fame of the monastery attracted many students from foreign countries. Outside the monasteries Brahmans and Kṣatriyas were "clean handed and unostentatious, pure and simple in life and very frugal." There was a system of popular education open to all sects, though it is not clear how far it extended. Children of seven years of age, after learning the alphabet and a primer called Siddhan, began a course of study in the "Five Sāstras," i.e. grammar, the science of arts and crafts, medical knowledge, logic and principles of philosophy. Nor was learning sought solely for the honours and rewards which were plentifully bestowed on it by all classes of society. Even men of wealthy families took to the path of knowledge without

<sup>1</sup> The Crescent Moon was the Indian symbol of jñāna or dhyāna—knowledge or insight—afterwards appropriated by the Ottoman T as the ensign of Islam.

hope of worldly reward, finding 'honour only in knowing truth and no disgrace in being destitute' This keen search after truth went hand in hand with a firm belief in the wonder-working powers of relic stupas, in magic and in spells The Buddha's injunction to the bhikkhus "never to learn or teach the low arts of divination, spells, omens, astrology, sacrifices to gods, witchcraft and quackery" <sup>1</sup> was unheeded

Harsha, assisted by his widowed sister, Rājāsri, ruled his own kingdom and about twenty vassal states with the firmness and benevolence of Asoka, touring through his dominions the greater part of the year and keeping strict control both over secular affairs and the conduct of the Sangha, in which he was specially interested The royal bounty was given lavishly to all religious foundations The penal laws were more severe than in the palmy days of the Guptas The Buddhist prohibition of the slaughter of animals for food was in force With regard to the upkeep of roads, tree planting, etc., the maintenance of inns and hospitals for travellers, and the support of religious education, Harsha followed the time honoured tradition of Āryāvarta, discriminating in favour of those who shared his own opinions but showing due regard to the tenets of others

Huen Tsang's reputation for learning spread far and wide Both Harsha and his principal vassal, the Rājā of Kāmarūpa (Assam), were eager to listen to his exposition of Mahāyāna doctrines, although Harsha was inclined to Hīnayāna teaching and the Rājā was an orthodox Brahman The chief event of the Chinese scholar's visit to Kanauj in 644 was a general assembly of pandits summoned by Harsha to discuss a thesis presented to him by Huen Tsang It was attended by Brahmans, Buddhists and Jains to the number of 6000, and opened in great state by Harsha himself, attended by all the tributary princes of the empire The debate, lasting eighteen days, was a great triumph for Huen Tsang's dialectics The congress was followed by a public festival at Prayāg, the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Chullavaṃsa* v

fluence of the Ganges and Jumna, where Harsha, according to custom, distributed all the surplus accumulated in his treasury in the preceding five years to thousands of Buddhist and Jain bhikkus, to Brahmans and the poor laity of all sects. Huen Tsang refused Harsha's request that he would remain in India, and returned to his native country in 645 with a rich collection of manuscripts, relics and images.

Muhammad was a contemporary of Harsha, and while the congress of religions at Kanauj was debating the philosophy of Buddhism his fiery Khalif was carrying the teaching of Islam into Persia at the sword's point. Before Harsha's death in 647 the nomads of the Arabian deserts were following the tracks of their forerunners from the steppes, bent on pious plunder of the "infidel." From 644 to 646 there was some desultory fighting on the Indian frontier. By 712 one of the armies of the Khalif Walid, under the command of Muhammad Kāsim, had conquered the province of Sind.

#### CHRONOLOGY, *circa* A.D. 300-647.

- A.D.
- c 320 Chandragupta I acc. Gupta era begins.
  - c 330 Samudragupta acc. Becomes suzerain of the Deccan and Southern India.
  - c 375-413 Chandragupta II
  - c 395 Chandragupta II conquers the Saka rulers of Western India (Great Satraps).
  - c 400-56 Kalidasa Sanskrit dramatist.
  - c 401-10 Fa Hien's travels in India.
  - c 413 Kumargupta acc.
  - c 418 Huns occupy the Oxus valley. Hun era begins.
  - c 435-67 Skandagupta.
  - 465 First Hun invasion of India.
  - 476 Āryabhaṭa, astronomer, b.
  - c 480-90 Hun invasions and decline of Gupta empire. Maurya and Gurjara dynasties in W. India.
  - 500 Toramana, Hun king of Malwa.
  - c 502-28 Mihiragula, Hun king of Malwa.
  - 505-87 Varahamihira, astronomer of Ujjain.
  - 599 Brahmagupta astronomer, b.
  - 606-647 Harsha Vardhana, king of Kanauj.

A D

c 620 Pulakesin II Chalukyan king defeats Harsha

622 Flight of Muhammad (Hijra era)

629-645 Hsuen Tsang's travels

712 Arab conquest of Sind

## CHAPTER XIV

CHINESE AND TIBETAN INVASION—THE RÂJPUTS GURJARAS,  
MAITRAKAS ETC.—RAJPUT CULTURE FROM THE SEVENTH  
TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES—THE PALA AND SENA  
DYNASTIES

THE premature death of Harsha in 647 brought fresh calamities for India. He seems to have left no heir competent to take the responsibility of a ruler. One of his ministers, a Brahman called Arunāsa, or Arjuna, succeeded to the throne, probably nominated according to custom by the Council of State. He immediately involved himself in a disastrous war with China's ally, Srong Tsan Gampo, the king of Tibet, by permitting the emperor's envoy, sent on a friendly mission to Harsha to be mobbed in the streets of Kanauj. The envoy, Wang hsien-tse escaped, and returning with the armies of Tibet and Nepāl, attacked Arunāsa's forces in Tirhut, took him prisoner, together with his whole family, and carried him off to China where he ended his days. A severe drought and famine added to the political confusion in India, and Harsha's empire was completely dissolved.

For three and a half centuries after this time, or until the Turk Mahmud of Ghazni, began his plundering campaign the political history of Northern India resolved itself into constant feuds between the rival Rajput and other dynasties with a short interlude when the Arab incursion distracted their attention. Kanauj Harsha's capital often changed ownership. About 740 and again in 779 it was captured by the kings of Kashmir. Dharmapala of Gaur, or Bengal, took

and variety of recruits who joined the Kshatriya ranks, for mixture with Brahman blood gave to a ruling family a social prestige which not even a Chakravartin could ignore. The first of the Guptas, a Vaishya by caste struck gold coins to celebrate his marriage with a princess of the aristocratic Licchavi clan. The Andhras of the Deccan were proud of their supposed descent from a Brahman mother. The new recruits constantly being absorbed by the Indian military caste were by no means always the result of foreign invasion. Many were really King's sons, the numerous progeny of hereditary Rajas who found it expedient or necessary to seek fortune outside the paternal dominions. The sons of Brahman kings by non Brahman wives or concubines were reckoned as Kshatriyas. The royal body guards, often formed of foreign mercenaries, Greek, Saka, Yueh chi and others, or of warlike aboriginal tribes, supplied many others. Others again were Irānian immigrants forced to seek shelter among their kinsmen of Āryāvarta.

To the latter category belong perhaps, the Maitrakas of Valabhi who, under a leader called Bhatarka, are first heard of in the Surashtra peninsula about A.D. 480 acknowledging the suzerainty of the Guptas. For a time the Valabhī Rajas were tributary to the Huns and later on they came within Harsha's empire, but after his death they ruled as independent sovereigns with considerable distinction until about 770. The present royal house of Mewār (Udaipur) traces its descent from this dynasty. The Gurjaras, who gave their name to the province of Gujarat, were a foreign tribe which came to the front in the time of the White Huns. About 455 they established a petty kingdom in South Rājputāna with a capital at Bhūnmāl. About 580 they possessed the great seaport Bharoch (Broach). An offshoot of the tribe, the Parihār Gurjaras, founded a new dynasty about 725 and it was one of this line, Nagabhata Parihār, who made Kanauj his capital. When Mahmud appeared before it two centuries later it boasted of nearly 10 000 temples, and was considered the

premier city of Hindustan Delhi played no great part in the pre Muhammadan history of India. It was only founded by a chief of a Pajput clan the Tomaras about A.D. 736.

They were no rough illiterate barons lording it over a down trodden peasantry these Parihars and their rivals the Guhilots or Sisodias of Mewar the Chauhans of Ajmer the Pawars of Malwa the Rahtors and Chandellas of Bundelkhand and many other chieftains who found in Rajasthan the ideal home of a feudal aristocracy. The village communities with their craft and trade guilds and the *blumias* or landowners with inalienable rights in the soil formed says Tod a strong *imperium in imperio*. The amenities of the Court were those of an intellectual and cultivated if somewhat conventional state of society. Its mentality is reflected in the *lavys* or epics of the court poets which from the seventh century onwards begin to show a tendency towards high flown phrases and academic tricks of rhythm. They revel in amatory lyrics often exquisite in form but gradually becoming more and more artificial in sentiment. We learn that the court of Valabhi in the seventh century listened with delight to a *lavya* based on the oft told story of Rama because it illustrated to per

especially in Bundēlkhand, there exist to this day many of the splendid irrigation works with embankments of monumental masonry which won the admiration and envy of Alberūnī and other travellers in the eleventh century

We get a further revelation of the mentality of these Rājput rulers in a play performed about 1063 at the court of the Chandēl Rājā, Kirtivarman, entitled *Prabodha Chandro'daya*, "The rise of the Moon of Knowledge," which glorified in six acts the doctrines of Vedānta philosophy and had for a climax the triumph of True Knowledge over Error. This old morality play is appreciated by modern Sanskrit scholars as a fine piece of dramatic writing and "one of the most remarkable products of Indian literature"<sup>1</sup>

A side light is thrown on the life of the times by occasional references to the intellectual game which amused the Rājas and their courts—the war-game *chatur anga*, or chess, which is also an Indian invention brought by the Arabs to Europe.<sup>2</sup> *Chatur-anga*, "the four limbed," meant the four divisions of the Indian army, footmen, horsemen, chariots and elephants, led by the Rājā and his councillor, the commander-in-chief. In actual fighting, as in the game, the Rājput clans were bound by strict rules, based on the sacro sanct traditions of the *Mahābhārata*, which while protecting non-combatants and mitigating the cruelties of warfare were too inelastic to maintain the efficiency of the Rājput arms when opposed by unconventional tactics of unclean foreigners who would not play the game.

Brahmanism also began to outgrow its strength in the endeavour to give every cult a niche in the vast temple of Āryāvarta and thus create a spiritual synthesis out of the heterogeneous mass of the Indian population. Brahmanism itself was becoming too heterogeneous in composition to maintain a clear and definite code of ethics. It tended to make

<sup>1</sup> Professor Macdonell, *Sansk. Lit.* p. 366

<sup>2</sup> It was invented several centuries before the time now alluded to, but is first mentioned in the literature of the 7th century

dharmā a prescription of custom rather than a law of righteousness. The building of innumerable temples in honour of popular cults created a large class of ignorant and illiterate priests who had no claim to share in the honours and privileges of Brahmanhood. The playwrights show us a low type of Brahman as the court fool. Brahmins of the better class undoubtedly used their influence to maintain a high standard of political morality, according to Brahman ideals and so far as the Rājput States were concerned they seem to have generally succeeded. Some Indian playwrights give pictures of profligate and wine bibbing courts and such no doubt there were. Kalhana in his chronicles of the Kashmir kings gives many historical instances in his country of royal drunkards and sexual degenerates who disgraced the throne and dragged the state into anarchy. Such lapses from dharma generally arose from plural marriages and Kshatriya neglect of caste rules. When kings took their numerous wives and concubines indiscriminately from all classes including those outside the Āryan pale it frequently happened that the sons of low born women were able to seize the throne and put their illiterate and ignorant relatives into places of power and trust.

But the rulers of Rājputana in the period under review had it seems a clean and honourable record in this respect. Among the names which stand out conspicuously in Rājput annals was Yasovarman Rājā of Kanauj in the first half of the eighth century. He was the patron of Bhāvaabhuṭi, the famous dramatist who when Yasovarman was defeated and slain by Lalitāditya followed the conqueror to Kashmir. Bhoja or Mihira Parihār who ruled at Kanauj from circ. 840 to 890 was commended by an Arab historian for the good order he kept in his dominions. The Pawārs of Malwā, Munja (974-99) and Bhoja (1018-60) were renowned both for their literary accomplishments and for their skill at arms.

In Bihar and Bengal a period of anarchy followed after Harsha's death until circ. 700 a prince named Gopāla was elected as Rājā and became the first of a great dynasty which



ruled at Lakhnauti or Gaur up to the end of the twelfth century. Gopala's son and successor Dharmapala, as stated above, captured Kanauj and disputed with the Rajput states the command of Northern India. Under the Pala dynasty Bihar continued to be the last stronghold of Mahayana Buddhism in India; its magnificent temple furnished the material for the mosques of the first Muhammadan rulers of Gaur. The great Chola emperor Parajendra invaded the Pala territory *circa* 1023 with the result that a new dynasty—that of the Senas—founded by a Brahman Raja from the Deccan shared the sovereignty of Bengal with the Palas until both were overthrown by the Muhammadan invader.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOUTHERN INDIAN DYNASTIC AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY FROM ABOUT THE THIRD CENTURY A.D. TO THE MUHAMMADAN INVASION

FOR about three and a half centuries after the end of the Andhra dynasty, or from the beginning of the third century A.D. Āryavarta's greatest colony, Dravida desa, is only heard of at rare intervals. During all this time it continued steadfastly to absorb Āryan culture from Brahmanical ashrams, Buddhist and Jain monasteries and from the courts of Āryanised rulers. The Hun invasions and other political disturbances drove many northerners to seek safety behind the mountain bulwarks of the Deccan. The occasional raids of southern kings into northern territory assisted the same movement. Skilled craftsmen were always in demand and recruitment for the public works staff of royal courts was both voluntary and compulsory. The capture of a few thousand artificers in the defeat of a rival's army was more valuable than gold or silver when temples, palaces or great irrigation works were to be built and these were the necessary appurtenances of

every royal court. The Andhras raided Magadha, and perhaps occupied Pataliputra for a time, when at the height of their power. These victories no doubt left their mark on the great city of Amarāvati, famous for its splendid stūpas. Karikāla, the Chola king, about the second century A.D. obtained 3000 craftsmen from Ceylon by a naval attack, and with their labour embanked the Kāveri river for a distance of 100 miles. Another of the same line, Rājendra Chola deva I, forced the Pāla king of Gaur, Mahipāla, to acknowledge his suzerainty and with the fruits of victory built a great temple to Siva, a palace and a huge reservoir at Gangai konda (the Ganges Pool) in the Trichinopoly district.

But such occasional military excursions were by no means typical of the normal relationship between the north and south. After Asoka's time Southern India, though generally isolated from the north politically, remained always bound to it by the closest intellectual and spiritual ties. The Ārya ṁśhrams on the Western Ghats were staunch to their ancient Vedic traditions, and though the Pāndyan capital, Madura, became famous for its learned discussions it was to its namesake on the Jumna, to Ujjain or Benares, that the aspiring scholar went to win his final "letters of victory." The pilgrims of the north often came to follow on foot the wanderings of their great hero Rāma. But for the people of Dravida the great northern *tirth* to Mt. Kailāsa and the holy lake, or to the land where Sakya牟尼 and Mahāvira lived and attained Nirvāna, had the greatest attractions. Every Siva temple in the south reproduces in its *garbha griha*, the holy of holies, the Himālayan cell of the divine Yoga.

It was therefore to be expected that the neo-Brahmanism of the north, which was preparing the way for the final break-up of the Buddhist Sangha, would find an echo in the south. As early as the sixth century a minister of one of the Pāndyan kings at Madura adapted the doctrine of bhakti to the cult of Siva, and became known as the "Hammer of the Buddhists" by his dialectical successes in upholding the authority of the

**Vedas** In the seventh century the movement became a popular one, many of the most ardent propagandists being Sudras. Kumārila Bhatta, who lived in the first half of the eighth century, was a Brahman leader who attacked both the Buddhists and the Jains, basing his teaching on the theistic philosophy of the *Vimāmsa* school. He was a ritualist of the old Vedic school but showed a desire to avoid obscurantism, even when the authority of the Vedas was in question, by explaining as solar myths various legends told in the *Brāhmanas* of the amours of Vedic deities.

Kumārila was followed about the beginning of the ninth century by the famous exponent of the *advaita*, or non-dualistic, philosophy of the Vedānta, Śaṅkarācārya. He belonged to the Ārya or Nambūdiri Brahmans, who in very early times had colonised Kerala (Malabar), keeping up their Vedic traditions with scrupulous care, as they do to this day. His career was very typical of an Indian religious reformer. He took the vow of a *sannyāsin* at the age of thirty-two. Then he went to Benares, as his great forerunner Śakyamuni had done, and won his final credentials in the debating hall of the ancient university. Thereafter most of his life was spent in visits to royal courts and other seats of learning, overthrowing in debate the Jain and Buddhist pandits who opposed him, and organising a new religious Sangha, open to all castes, in which the worship of Śiva was co-ordinated with the monistic teaching of the Vedānta. Śaṅkarācārya was a representative of the highest Brahman intelligentsia, who set his face against the ritualistic enormities which were practised in his time by many sects. As his name—assumed when he took his vows of asceticism—implies, he laid stress on the beneficent aspect of the Supreme Deity, and did not traffic in the fears and superstitions of the ignorant. When his work in Southern India was finished he retired to a Himālayan monastery at Kedarnath, on the road to Kailasa, where he died, *circa* 820.

These successive religious movements established firmly

the Śūva forms of Brahmanical theism which predominate in Southern India at the present day. Though Sankaracharya made no attack on the theology of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, his theory of *Mayā* or the illusive character of mundane experiences, based upon his reading of the Upanishads and Brahmasūtras made a great stir in the Vaishnava camp as it struck at the base of the main pillar of the Vaishnava religious system the doctrine of *bhakti*. Rather more than two centuries after Sankaracharya's death another Brahman of Southern India, Rāmānuja (b. 1016) took up the challenge, and relying on the same spiritual authority as Sankarācharya the Upanishads, established a thesis known as qualified monism, or *Viśiṣṭ advaitavada*, which removed the apparent flaw in Vaishnavā metaphysics. According to Rāmānuja the aggregate of human souls and inanimate matter constitute the attributes or Body of God but are not Ishvara himself—the Supreme Soul which pervades and controls the Universe. Therefore, he argued the sense of helplessness in the face of God leading to self-surrender and perfect devotion, is a necessary condition for the attainment of soul liberation (*moksha*). It is likely that in this and similar interpretations of the Upanishads the influence of Christian doctrine made itself felt.

These Brahman leaders had a considerable following among the masses, and a rich and beautiful vernacular literature grew out of the religious fervour shared by all classes. But the esoteric doctrines of the Brahman cults were mostly written in Sanskrit. Their elaborate ritualistic systems were graduated in accordance with orthodox Brahmanical principles to meet the relative spiritual capacities of different castes. Later on Brahman prejudices were so far broken down that a great teacher like Pāmānand could take his meals with outcaste disciples and use the vernacular in expounding the Vedic Scriptures. This radical change only took place after the Muhammadan conquest had driven a wedge into the whole social and political system of Brahmanism. On the other hand the non-Āryan people who absorbed Āryan culture were

by no means always content to remain in a state of intellectual subservience to their teachers. They insisted on their right to interpret the Vedic Scriptures in their own way and in their own language. In the eleventh century the Saivas of the Lingayat sect though led by a Brahman Basava abolished caste restrictions between themselves forbade early marriages and were equally hostile to Jains and orthodox Brahmins.

Religious controversy in the south seems to have been conducted with a bitterness and violence common enough in other countries but generally foreign to India. Thus the hymns in honour of Siva composed by Sambandha a Brahmin saint still much honoured in the Tamil country are interjected with imprecations against Buddhist and Jains. A popular festival at Madura still preserves the tradition that a Pandyan king of the seventh century impaled a great number of Jains who refused to worship Siva. There are several recorded instances of the destruction of Jain and Buddhist monasteries and temples by early Chola kings. Pamanuja had to fly for his life from the persecution of the Chola monarch of his day Kariakala of Tanjore. Some of the Chola wars were carried on with unexampled ferocity. Paja raja the Great brought fire and sword into the Chalukyan territory sparing neither Brahmins nor women and children. Basava the militant leader of the Lingayats procured the assassination of the king his master whom he failed to convert and incited his followers to destroy all heretics whether Brahmins or Jains.

How far this religious animosity influenced the constant struggle for political supremacy among the different dynasties of the south it is impossible to say but as feelings ran high it was easy to find a *casus belli* on religious grounds especially as the Purohita or royal chaplain ranked highest in the king's council and according to the constitutional law of the Nitisaras countersigned all state documents. Language and race perhaps were more decisive factors. The Andhra dynasty sank into obscurity in the early part of the third century and the place of the Andhra bhasha or Telugu speaking people

as the ruling power of the Deccan was gradually taken by one of the Tamil speaking races from farther south—the Pallavas, who ousted the Cholas from their ancient capital, Kānchī or Conjeveram. During Pallava supremacy their rivals in Tamil land the Cholas, Pāndyas and Cheras, satisfied their martial instincts by fighting with each other or with Ceylon. The names of the Pallava chieftains imply Kshatriya descent, but the people themselves probably were of the ancient Naga race who were converted to Buddhism and figure prominently in early Buddhist art. Later on they were equally devoted followers of Saivism. Pallava ambition was checked, *circa* 355, by the triumphant arms of Samudragupta, but they quickly regained their position. Their chief feudatories allies or enemies—as occasion served—from the middle of the fifth century were the Kadāmbas, a Brahman dynasty in Kanara and West Mysore, whose capital was Vaijyanti, and the Gangas, who held most of the Mysore plateau. Farther north the Rashtrakūtas barred their way to the west coast. About A.D. 550 the Chalukyan Pulakesin I, a Rājput, who had established himself in the southern Marāthā country, entered the lists against the Pallavas and captured Bādāmi, one of their provincial capitals. For about three and a half centuries afterwards there was a triangular contest between the Rāshtrakūtas, the Chalukyas and the Pallavas, until the Cholas about the end of the ninth century intervened and, after a long struggle, not only made themselves masters of the whole Deccan, but with the aid of the most powerful fleet known in Indian history forced the Pāla king of Gaur and the kings of Ceylon and Prome in South Burma to acknowledge their suzerainty.

Only a few details of this long contest call for notice. First one dynasty and then another had the best of the fight. The Pallava, Mahendra varman I (*circa* 600–625) was defeated, *circa* 610, by the Chalukyan Pulakesin II, who took the rich province of Vēṅgi lying between the deltas of the Kṛishnā and Godāvārī rivers and put in his brother, Vishnu vardhana, as Viceroy. The latter, as usual, seized the first opportunity for

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declaring himself independent and founded a new dynasty that of the Eastern Chalukyas

Pulakesin's success against the armies of Harsha has been already noticed. Hiuen Tsang visited both the Pallava and Chalukyan courts. He was greatly impressed by Pulakesin's military strength, which caused him to despise and slight his enemies, but he admired more the Kānchi people's respect for learning. In 642, two years after Hiuen Tsang's visit, the Pallava army under Narasimha varman paid off old scores. Bādāmi was recaptured, and Pulakesin apparently fell in battle. The struggle continued for another century, when a Rāshtrakūta prince, hitherto a feudatory of the Chalukyas, deposed his war-lord and took his place in the battle field. The Rāshtrakūtas had the best of the fight with all their neighbours until about 973, when the last of their dynasty was deposed by a scion of the Chalukyan line, Tailapa, who made Kalyān his capital. Thereafter the contest lay between the Chalukyas of Kalyān and the Cholas. The Pallavas after another defeat by the Chalukyas in 740 were of little account; they dropped out of history after the end of the ninth century, when the Cholas rose to power. The Arabs conquered Sind, circ. 712, when the Rāshtrakūtas were rulers of the Deccan. Not being strong enough by either land or sea to attack their formidable southern neighbours, the Sultans of Sind entered into friendly relations with them. Arab traders were allowed to settle and build a mosque in Rashtrakūta territory.

The records of the religious movements in which these southern kings took an active part have been carefully preserved in both Sanskrit and vernacular literature, in Sankarāchārya's and Rāmanūja's famous commentaries—the chief corner stones of modern Hinduism—in the hymns of Sambandhu, Appar and Sundara, in the Tamil Purāna and Sīdhanta-Sāstras<sup>1</sup>. Many great temples and monasteries built by royal command are memorials of them. The wonderful "Rathas" carved out of granite boulders at Māmallapuram

<sup>1</sup> Philosophical treatises.

mark the reign of the great Pallava, Narasimha, and his successor. The last but one of the early Chālukyas, Vikramāditya II, celebrated his triumphs by a splendid temple at Pattadakal, planned as a Sivālaya, Siva's Himālayan paradise. The Rāshtrakūtas at the height of their power under Krishna I tried to surpass it by carving another, larger and more sumptuous, out of the living rock at Ellora. Images of the saints, the Ālvārs or Bhaktas, who composed the hymns in praise of Vishnu or Siva, were set up in the temple precincts and the quantity of splendid temple sculpture breathing the spirit of bhakti which has escaped the iconoclastic zeal of Islam proves the extraordinary richness of the artistic resources which these war lords commanded. But it is characteristic of the age that of their own personalities, or of their own exploits in the battlefield, there is hardly any record written, painted or sculptured. The temples they built tell nothing of their life except brief summaries of conquests which made so little impression on popular memory that whole dynasties, like the Pallava, were completely forgotten though their temples are still in daily use at Kānchi.

It should be understood that these great temples, though partly built by forced labour,<sup>1</sup> were public institutions representing the collective energy of the state, rather than monuments for the king's personal glorification. They had their civic as well as religious uses, they fulfilled the purposes of a town hall, theatre and concert hall, college and technical school. The people met in the temple porches to elect representatives for the municipal council or to listen to sacred music, recitations or plays. The schools attached to the

<sup>1</sup> This applies to the mechanical labour involved in building or excavations, but not to the architectural work or fine sculpture which adorned the sacred edifice from the base to the summit. These were the pious offerings to the Deity of skilled craftsmen, religious devotees who gave up their lives to following the *karma marga*, the path of worship by work, like the sadhu or sannyasin who took the alternative paths of bhakti or jnana. They derived the means of subsistence from the king's treasury, but their work was an offering to the Deity, not to the king.

temple were the repositories of the philosophical lore of the Vedas which in the south as well as in the north were at this period the mainspring of religious life. The temple craftsmen kept alive the Sanskrit traditions of building town planning and metal working embodied in the *Silpa Sastras* by which all great public works were regulated.

The building of great temples implied always a corresponding activity in irrigation works and bathing tanks in road making and provision for pilgrims for the temples were not complete without the accessory reservoirs bathing places wells roads causeways and bridges dedicated as oblations to Vishnu the Lord of Life. Sukracharya the reputed author of a South Indian treatise on social and political law (*mitisara*) was well acquainted with the technique of road making. He says that the king's road (*Raja marga*) connecting town and village should be made with a convex surface (tortoise backed) that it should be drained on both sides and be repaired annually with stones or gravel by convict labour at the king's expense. A splendid example of such a road an *Āryan Way* 300 miles long probably built in the great Chola period which coincided with the palmy days of the Khmer dynasty is still in evidence in *Āryavarta*'s far eastern colony Cambodia with which Southern India was closely connected by the sea routes.

The doughty warriors who posed as Vishnu's representatives on earth and punished with the utmost severity—sometimes with savage cruelty—any infraction of king made laws did not themselves transgress the craftsman's law that likenesses of human beings were forbidden in the palaces of the gods. They must have been conscious of the limitations which the *Āryan dharma* they propagated so zealously put upon their authority. These are very clearly indicated in Sukracharya's treatise. Besides defining the jurisdiction of the king's officers as affecting the self governing powers of villages craft guilds merchant guilds and religious organisations he denounces as a thief the

to be the servant of his subjects. An unrighteous king might destroy the state, but he had to reckon with public opinion, which, like a rope of many fibres, could tame a ferocious lion.

The Cholas, like the Rājputs, claimed descent from the divine heroes of the *Mahābhārata*, and the organisation of their empire, when they came into their own again about the middle of the ninth century, seems to have been entirely on the principles laid down in Sanskrit law codes. The Chola system of village unions administering their own affairs by elected assemblies resembled that described by Manu. The inscriptions by different Chola rulers testify to the great respect with which the assemblies were treated by the king's officers when the latter were called in to arbitrate in disputes. Nor were the Cholas singular in this respect. Their great antagonists, the Chalukyan princes, also professed attachment to the Āryan dharma. The *Mitāksharā*, a commentary by Vijnāneśvara on the *Dharma śāstra* of Yājñavalkya, which is recognised as the standard work on Hindu law by British courts of justice, was written by one of the courtiers of Vikramāditya VI, son of the Chalukyan Somesvara, who inflicted a crushing defeat on the Cholas in the battle-field of Koppam, *circa* 1052.

The height of the Chola power was reached in the reigns of Rāja rāja deva (985-1017) and his son Rājendra Chola deva I (1017-1035), or in the half century following the fall of the Rāshtrakūṭa dynasty when Āryāvarta was suffering from the plundering raids of Mahmūd of Ghaznī. Rāja rāja's armies, assisted by a powerful fleet, forced the Chalukyans of Vēṅgi into an alliance, took tribute from Kalinga on the east coast and Chera on the west, the Pāndyas and Singhalese on the south, and the Gangas who held the rich gold mines of Mysore. He devoted the spoils of war to building the great Tanjore temple with a vimāna 190 feet high, the loftiest in Southern India. The inclined plane by which the coping stone weighing 80 tons was dragged to the top was, it is said, four miles long.

Rājendra Chola-deva, his son, was as successful on sea as his father had been on land. He transported an army, including

war elephants across the Bay of Bengal fought the fleet of the king of Prome or Pegu, and captured his city Kadaram about forty years before William of Normandy crossed the English Channel and won the battle of Hastings<sup>1</sup>. It was therefore not without significance that the chief memorial of his victory was a great reservoir the Ganges Pool before mentioned, with a dam of granite masonry twelve miles long provided with sluices for irrigation. By this pious work, according to the Mahanirvana Tantra he gained the right to dwell in the blissful region of Brahma for a hundred years for each drop of water it held.

After Rajendra's death in 1042 the tributary states began to give trouble, and Somesvara the Chalukyan *circa* 1052, won the battle of Koppam on the Tungabhadra River, in which Rājendra's son was killed. The Chola fortunes revived temporarily under Kulottunga I (1074-1118) who united the Chola and Eastern Chalukyan dynasties through his mother, a daughter of Rajendra Chola deva. He shared the sovereignty of the Deccan with Vikramāditya VI of the Western Chalukyan line, the patron of the great jurist Vijnānesvara, and of Bilhana, who—so the story goes—averted the king's wrath and won a princess for his bride by the pathos of his love sonnets. Under these two monarchs the Deccan enjoyed an interval of peace. But when Alauddin crossed the Vindhya in 1294 both the Cholas and Chalukyans had been put out of action by the insubordination of their feudatories. The brunt of the Muslim attack fell first upon the Yadavas, who had broken away from the Chalukyan rāj, and sixteen years later upon the Hoysalas of Mysore, a dynasty which superseded the ancient Gangas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

A comparison of the turgid exuberance of the Hoysala school of building with the virile creative work of the Chola,

<sup>1</sup> Another interesting historical parallel occurs in Chola history. Kulottunga I following the example of one of his predecessors ordered a general survey of his dominions for purposes of land revenue. This took place in 1086 the year of the Norman Domesday Book.

Pallava and early Chalukyan builders and sculptors confirms the impression given by contemporary Sanskrit literature that there were other than political reasons for the sudden collapse of Āryāvarta's forces under the attacks of Islam. From the seventh to the eleventh centuries Southern Indian art vibrates with intense creative energy, yet it lacks neither coherency nor self-restraint. Then, as in a forest choked with undergrowth, it gradually runs riot in a maze of elaboration and pedantic artifice. The same tendency is found in the temples of Northern India, beginning with the Vimala Saha temple at Mt. Ābū. There is an extraordinary fecundity of decorative ideas, dexterity in manipulation of materials and the patience of Nature itself—which seems, however, to connote mental inertia when there is no leading thought to give a strong *creative impulse to the whole design*. The ritual of art was choking its inspiration and this lowering of creative vitality apparently affected the whole machinery of the state.

But in the early part of the twelfth century, not many years before the storm of the Muhammadan conquest broke, there were still no mean lights in the Hindu firmament. Rāmanuja's philosophical teaching was bringing many converts to the Vaishnava fold. Jayadeva, the poet—precursor of a long line of Bengali mystics which stretches down to the present day—in his masterpiece, the *Gītā Govinda*, was singing the love of Krishna and Rādhā. Bhaskarachārya (b. 1114), called the Indian Newton, kept up the great traditions of Brahman scientists who were then solving problems in equations which puzzled European mathematicians five centuries later.

#### CHRONOLOGY OF SOUTHERN INDIA, FROM A.D. 550 TO 1294

A.D.

- c. 550-750 Pallavas supreme in Southern India at Kanchi. Early, or Western Chalukyan dynasty rules at Bādami.
- c. 608-642 Pulakesin II (Chalukyan)
- c. 620 Pulakesin II defeats Harsha. Eastern Chalukyan dynasty founded by Vishnu vardhana.

A.D.

- c 625-645 Narasimha varman (Pallava)    Founds Mamallapuram.
- 640 Hsuen Tsang visits Kanchi
- c 642 Pulakesin II overthrown by Narasimha varman
- 740 Kanchi taken by Western Chalukyas
- Kumarila Bhatta revives Vedic teaching at Madura
- 753 Early Chalukyas overthrown by the Rashtrakutas
- c 760 Kailasa temple at Ellora begun by Krishna I (Rashtrakuta)
- c 785-820 Sankaracharya preaches the *Advaita* doctrine
- 907 Parantaka I Chola asc.
- c 973 Tailapa overthrows the Rashtrakutas and founds the 2nd Chalukyan dynasty at Kalvan
- c 985-1017 Raja raja Chola    Building of the great Tanjore temple
- c 1023 Gangai-konda Cholanpuram founded by Rajendra Chola deva I
- 1032 Cholas defeated by Chalukyas at Koppam
- c 1100-87 Lingayat sect founded by Basava
- 1190-1311 Independent Hoysala dynasty at Dharmamudra (Mysore)
- 1294 Alaaddin crosses the Vindhya and takes Devagiri

## APPENDIX

## FRAS

THE eras in India were either based upon astronomical observa-

## PART II

# MUHAMMADAN RULE AND THE RETURN OF THE ĀRYANS

## CHAPTER I

### HINDU AND MUHAMMADAN POLITY—THE TURKS AND AFGHANS IN INDIA

INDIAN history before the Muhammadan conquest shows the gradual evolution of the idea of a religious state, based upon collective principles, in which the Dharma stood for the people's will, connoting belief in a divine ordering of human affairs. Collectively the Indo Āryan, or Hindu, state was a free one governed on constitutional principles, but the religious convictions of the people deliberately subordinated the attainment of political liberty for the individual to the vigilant and ardent pursuit of spiritual freedom, in which all members of the body politic were on an equal footing, though inevitably the way for some was longer than for others.

As regards the practical administration of the state, the principle of self government was recognised in village, town and district councils, in trade and craft guilds, in religious communities and in caste organisation, whose collective influence imposed a very real restraint upon the powers delegated to hereditary kings and their ministers—the latter representing the interests of religion, law and political economy,



trade and commerce public works and health Caste rules which were essential to this scheme of spiritual self government followed according to Brahmanical ideas the law of evolution on the physical plane which was a gradual process of perfection realised in a long chain of successive lives and not through sudden shocks or convulsions of nature But the system was more elastic than it is at the present day There were always possibilities for the admission into the body politic of foreign communities following the Arvan Path

The Muslim also sought the Right Path (Quran lxxii 14) The Prophet's definition of Islam—belief in God and His Messenger praying in a prescribed form the giving of alms fasting and making pilgrimages—contained nothing to which the strictest Brahman could not readily subscribe Islam clashed with Hindu ideals chiefly because the primitive social and economic laws of the Arabian desert did not fit in with the complicated conditions of Indian life or with Brahmanical interpretations of universal laws On the question of idolatry Muhammad echoed the sentiments of the Vedic Pishus and of the Buddha The Brahmins might easily have admitted into their Order the spiritual aristocracy of Islam—the descendants of the Prophet and of his relatives who like themselves claimed from the state special rights and privileges as the divine elect But when the principle of divine election was thus recognised there was no logic in the proposition that the pariah by reciting the Islamic mantram could wipe out the effects of karma and at once become fit to be a ruler of men

Muhammad had no new message for Indian philosophers The Ekantika dharma the law of monotheism had been preached in the Upanishads and in the *Bhagavad Gita* for thousands of years before the Hijra His social polity appealed only to the low caste Hindu and could only be imposed upon India by force Economic conquest was however of vital importance for Islam Neither Arabs nor Turks were a self supporting community when they forsook their nomadic habits for a city life They could not subsist without plunder and

slave labour The armies of the Ommayyad Khalif which crossed the Indian frontier about 711 came not to parley but to fight The Arabs, it seems, hit upon the weak point of Hindu polity—its treatment of the low castes There had been a dynastic revolution, a Brahman Rājā superseding a Buddhist, and some of the tribes complained of his tyranny With the help of these malcontents the Arab conquered Sind from the Indus delta up to Multan Having command both of sea and land routes the Khalif at Damascus could now control the whole transit trade between Europe and the East and supply all the needs of his soldiery Half a century later, after the brutal massacre of the Ommayyad family, the Abbasid Khalif and his followers no longer felt themselves safe under the patriarchal conditions of Arab rule in Damascus, so they built themselves a citadel on the Tigris and relied for support on their Persian and Turkish allies Baghdad thus became the greatest exchange mart of the East, as Babylon had been in ancient times The Arabs in Sind were held up by the Rajputs, and receiving no support from Baghdad were unable to follow up their first victories

The Abbasid Khalifs had no feeling of a divine commission for the uplift of the Indian masses They enjoyed the huge profits of Indian trade and were on very friendly terms with the Hindu Rashtrakuta Rājas The Eastern Khalifate was a reconstruction, with the help of Persian officials, of the Sassanid *imperium*, and had nothing in common with the patriarchal political scheme of the early Khalifs Its inherent weakness and corruption diminished its aggressive tendencies, so that for two and a half centuries India remained at peace with its Muslim neighbours The spoils of broken empires and special taxes upon unbelievers created in Islam a considerable leisured class interested in travel and the acquisition of learning The introduction of paper manufacture into Baghdad from China supplied the demand for writing material Indo Āryan culture was absorbed by Islam in this period in directly through the Persian language and literature and

directly through Hindu physicians and pandits invited to Baghdad also through wealthy merchants and wandering scholars who came to India from various parts of the Khalifate. Arabic literature was thus enriched with the standard Sanskrit works on philosophy logic mathematics medical science and other subjects.

In the meantime the westward march of the nomads of the steppes held up for a time by the Arab thrust into Central Asia was resumed. Turkish tribesmen originally entering the Muslim community as fighting slaves gradually found themselves masters of a situation created by bitter disputes between Arab Sunnis and Persian Shi'ahs and by the ambitions of Persian provincial governors. After Harun al Rashid (786-809) the temporal power of the Abbasids dwindled until the Khalif was no longer master in his own palace. The Turkish bodyguard under pretence of guarding his person made the Khalif their puppet.

The breakdown of the Eastern Khalifate did not however, affect India until about the end of the eleventh century when a Turkish adventurer Sabuktigin formerly a fighting slave became Amir of Ghazni. Requiring money and slave labour for maintaining his armed forces he began desultory raids across the Indian border. Jaipal the Raja of Lahore at first alone and afterwards in alliance with several Rajput princes suffered defeat in attempting to punish the raiders and Peshawar fell into Sabuktigin's hands.

Mahmud his son and successor (997-1030) was ambitious of throwing off his allegiance to the Samanid (Persian) dynasty of Bokhara and of assuming the place of dictator in the Khalifate then occupied by the Buwayhid princes of the province of Fars. For this purpose he needed more money and more slaves. Both could be had to an unlimited amount in the wealthy cities of the idolatrous Hindu. His duty as a good Muslim to root out idolatry by the sword of Islam thus coincided with his ambitions. Mahmud's plans were carefully prepared. His blows fell suddenly and in unexpected

places, for his intelligence department was well served by Indian spies,<sup>1</sup> and his Central Asian mounted archers, like the Scythians who worried the Roman legionaries, could move quickly over long distances, outriding the cumbrous war machine of the Rājput princes, with its elephants and horses bred more for military pageants than for serious warfare.

For about twenty-five years Mahmūd thus replenished his treasury almost every cold season from the pious offerings accumulated for centuries in Buddhist and Hindu temples. One after another the great temple fortresses, Kangrā, Mathurā, Kanauj, Somnāth and many others, were looted of their priceless treasures in gold and silver, jewels and bullion, and, as far as their massive construction permitted, destroyed. The inhabitants whose lives were spared, as being useful to Islam, were carried off to Ghaznī in hundreds of thousands to supply the Muslim labour market and the harems of Islam. Ghaznī was rebuilt on a grandiose scale by the forced labour of Indian artisans and became the chief slave market of the Khalfate. Every soldier in Mahmūd's army became a man of wealth and master of many slaves. The Khalīf Qādir rewarded Mahmūd's zeal by conferring on him the title of Amīn-ul-Millat, "Guardian of the Faith." His relations with the Commander of the Faithful were not, however, always so friendly. Some angry correspondence passed regarding the possession of Samarkand. Mahmūd threatened to sack Baghdad and bring the Khalīf's ashes to Ghaznī. He nevertheless found it expedient to placate orthodox Muslim sentiment by putting the Khalīf's name on his coins. He had no desire to be an Indian monarch, and contented himself with exercising suzerainty over the greater part of the Punjab, including Lahore. His reputation for culture rested on the achievements of Indian builders and his patronage of Persian poets, including Firdausi, the author of the famous epic, the *Shah-nāmah*.

Three years after Mahmūd's death a great famine, followed

<sup>1</sup> According to Ferishta a contingent of Rājput horse also served in Mahmūd's army.

by plague, devastated Mesopotamia, Persia and parts of India. The Seljuk Turks then broke through the Ghaznevide empire in their tumultuous rush westwards, and in 1150 Ghaznī itself went down in an orgy of blood—a fierce act of vengeance taken by the Sultan of Ghōr, Alāuddīn Husaīn. The next stage in the conquest of India began twenty-five years later, when Muhammad Ghōrī,<sup>1</sup> who had taken over the Sultanate of Ghaznī from his brother at Ghōr, advanced through Mūltān into Sind and attacked Gujarāt. He was beaten back with heavy loss by the Mahārājā of Anhilwāra, but in 1187 he secured Lahore deposing the last of Mahmūd's line who had taken refuge there. He was then in a better position for prosecuting a holy war against the idolatrous and too prosperous Hindu.

The Rājput princes now realised their danger. There were, as usual, dissensions among them. A deadly feud had arisen between Kanauj and Delhi, to which a romantic love affair lent piquancy, and the Gahāwar prince of Kanauj was accused of intriguing with the common enemy. But when Muhammad advanced again in 1191 a powerful confederate army, under the command of the Chauhān, Prithvī rāj of Ajmēr and Delhi, was victorious on the battle-field of Tarāin, near Thanēshwar, on the sacred ground where the Āryan heroes fought. Muhammad, smarting with a wound received in single combat with the brother of Prithvī rāj, retired to Ghaznī. In the following year he had again collected an army of 120,000 Turkī and Afghan horsemen. The rapidity with which the Muslims recovered from two disastrous defeats is significant. They had the same advantage as the Āryans enjoyed when they first entered India. They fought, as the Āryans had fought, with the horse and the bow, but they monopolised all the horse breeding grounds of Western Asia. The horse deteriorates in the plains of India and the Rājputs were cut off from their usual supplies through the Punjab.

At the second battle of Tarāin in 1192 Prithvī rāj again

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise known by his titles Muizz ud dīn and Shihāb ud dīn.

commanded the Hindu army, but at the end of a well fought day the charge of Muhammad's bodyguard of 10,000 mounted archers broke the Rājput ranks. The Muslims wreaked their vengeance in indiscriminate massacre. Prithvī rāj was taken prisoner and beheaded. His brother and many other Rājput chieftains fell in the fight. Thereafter the Muslim chroniclers, through whose labours the details of the campaign are known, revel in the count of the infidels slaughtered, of the temples pillaged and burnt, and of the loot and slaves which were the reward of the faithful. Ajmēr was taken immediately and sacked. Delhi held out until the year after the battle. In 1193 Kanauj also fell after a fight in which the Rājā Jai Chand was killed. Muhammad satiated with slaughter and laden with spoil, returned to Ghaznī, leaving a Turkish slave, Kutb ud dīn, in command of the Muslim cavalry, which swept through the country denuded of Hindu fighting men and found an easy prey in the Brahmans of Benares and the Buddhist monks of Bihār. They were massacred in tens of thousands or burnt together with their books and monasteries.

Amid the panic caused by these atrocities a raiding party led by one of Kutb ud dīn's officers, Muhammad Khiljī, surprised the Brahman king of Bengal, Lakshman Sena, in his palace at Nūdiāh. Lakshman escaped with bare life to Dacca, but all Bihār and a great part of Bengal fell into Muslim hands. The capture of the Chandēl fortress, Kālanjar, in 1203 made Kutb ud dīn master of Bundēlkhand. The Rājputs rallied in Gujarāt, in their famous stronghold Chitōr, under the shelter of the Arāvalli hills, and on the border of the desert in Mārwar (Jodhpur), but the Turks and Afghans had overrun the fairest provinces of Hindustan and had come to stay.

## CHAPTER II

THE SLAVE DYNASTY—THE KHLJI AND TUGHLAK (TURKISH)  
 DYNASTIES—HINDUISM UNDER MUSLIM RULE—RAMAN AND  
 AND KABIR—INDO MUHAMMADAN SCHOOLS OF ARCHI-  
 TECTURE—THE BEGINNING OF URDU

MUHAMMAD GHORI died from an assassin's knife in 1206 and from that time Kutb ud din became an independent ruler as Sultan of Delhi the first of the Slave dynasty which lasted for nearly a century. Slaves who by the fortune of war come into possession of a great kingdom cannot be expected to show much capacity for government whatever religion they may profess. Neither did Kutb ud din and his fellow slaves who shared his fortunes as provincial governors. They and their successors knew how to satisfy the greed and blood lust of their ferocious soldiery and kept down rebellion by systematic massacre and torture giving thanks to God in splendid mosques built up by Hindu slaves with the stones of ruined temples. Low caste Hindus and numbers of Buddhist laymen sometimes escaped this tyranny either by submitting to the religious discipline of the mullas or by becoming forest outlaws. Many a Hindu chieftain whose caste had been outraged made terms with the enemy and joined the Muslim ranks. Others migrated to countries where their caste honour was secure.

The conquerors of Hindustan had need of all the soldiery they could rally round the banner of Islam for about 1221 Chingiz Khan at the head of his well organised troopers began his terrific drive across Asia and Western Europe. The Delhi Court became a place of refuge for the shahs and sultans of Bokhara and Turkestan and their followers as well as for adventurers of all sorts driven out of their happy hunting grounds by the pagan Moguls. The fugitives helped to keep the Mogul raiders in check and strengthened the Muslim forces at Delhi in their campaigns against the remaining Hindu states.

They also gave a literary distinction to the Delhi Court for among the refugees were learned doctors of Islamic law historians and poets the latter including the famous Amir Khusru whose verses have become part of the folk lore of Northern India The cities pillaged by the Mogul nomads gave back to India some of the descendants of the Hindu craftsmen sold into slavery by Mahmud of Ghazni and his successors who had learnt to adapt Hindu building traditions to the prescriptions of Muslim ritual They now as good Musalmans served the proud Slave sultans in their gigantic building schemes Kutb ud din's mosque at Delhi with its lofty screen of pointed arches fronting the hall of worship pillared and domed with the carved masonry of Jain temple mandapams discreetly mutilated a similar mosque built by Altamsh (1211-32) at Ajmer the Kutb minar raised by Altamsh to the memory of a Muslim saint and his own tomb at Old Delhi

One of the most interesting figures in the Slave dynasty was Raziya Begam (1236-40) Altamsh's daughter, who read the Quran assiduously carried on an amour with an Abyssinian slave married her Turkish commander in chief and was murdered at her brother's instigation after a stormy reign of three years The last Slave sultan Kai Kobad a shameless debauchee was put out of the way in 1290 by the Muslim generals who accepted tyranny and violence from a strong ruler as necessary instruments of power but did not tolerate incompetency which threatened their own security in a country only held by force

The new sultan of their choice Jalaluddin Khilji was not however a success He was an old man and too lenient Instead of flaying alive rebels and thugs and stuffing their skins with straw as his predecessor Balban (1266-87)—the grim old tyrant who never laughed—had done he put them up into boats and sent them down the river as a present to Kai Kobad's father who had set himself up as an independent sultan at Gaur He also compromised with the Moguls and allowed



some of them professing Islam but not exactly orthodox to settle in villages near Delhi. Such conduct was not to be tolerated. Alauddin his favourite nephew and an adventurous young man who possessed himself of much loot by a raid into the Deccan (hitherto an unexplored Eldorado) laid a trap for his too confiding uncle and murdered him in face of his army. Alauddin (1296-1316) was acclaimed Sultan and did not disappoint his admiring followers. After ridding himself of all his uncle's family and close adherents he turned on the new Muslims—the Moguls who had enlisted in Jalaluddin's army. Hulagu's awful butchery of the faithful at the capture of Baghdad (1258) was not forgotten and rumours of disloyalty had reached Alauddin's ears. The massacre of twenty to thirty thousand of them in one day disposed of this risk. Then with the help of his wise councillors he devised rules and regulations for grinding down the Hindus—the principle being that rebellion should be prevented by leaving them with just enough for bare subsistence. The people says a Muhammadan historian were pressed and amerced money was exacted from them on every kind of pretence.<sup>1</sup>

By such means and by regulating the prices of grain and other commodities Alauddin was able to maintain a force of 400,000 cavalry with which he repelled five or six Mogul invasions and carried on successful war with the Hindu states. Gujarat was conquered. Here Alauddin won a prize in the Raja's wife—who for beauty, wit and accomplishments was the flower of India. Some Mogul troops helped the Rajputs to defend Ranthambhor but it fell after a long siege. Then Chitor—and as the remnant of the garrison rushed out in the last desperate sortie the women saved their honour on the funeral pyre.

In 1307 when the Mogul danger had been averted for a time and various conspiracies had been suppressed Alauddin's thoughts turned again to the Deccan—he sent a large army under the command of Malik Kafur a renegade Hindu to

<sup>1</sup> Tarkh i Firoz Shah

gather fresh spoils from the wealthy southern kingdoms After several campaigns the greater part of the south down to Madura was overrun Malik Kāfur returned to Delhi in 1311 with the Hoysala Rajā as captive and with loot in gold and jewels elephants horses and slaves which recalled the spacious days of Mahmūd of Ghaznī

Alauddin now posed as a 'second Alexander' The Khalif was of no account—he was a poor refugee in Egypt The Mogul had been held in check and might be subdued Alauddin had dreams of world conquest and even of a world religion But his health was undermined by excesses He died in 1316 Malik Kafūr, his general and chief eunuch, was left master of Delhi

Alauddin must be reckoned as one of the strong men of Islam, but conditions in his miscellaneous and numerous harem did not make for the breeding of a royal race After Malik Kafūr had met with a well deserved death at the hands of his own slaves, the Delhi throne was filled for a short time by a buffoon and sexual degenerate, Mubarak Khan Then he and the rest of the Khiljī brood were wiped out and pandemonium reigned in Delhi until another Turkish slave, Ghijās uddin Tughlak, born of a Jat mother, got the upper hand (1321) He secured himself and his treasury in the strong fortress of Tughlakabād four miles out of Delhi and strengthened the defences of the north west frontier Revolts in the Deccan and disturbances in Bengal occupied him thereafter until his death in 1325 by an "accident" carefully planned by his son Muhammad bin Tughlak, who succeeded him

Muhammad the parricide, was the maddest of all the rulers in those mad times He was proud of his elegant handwriting, dabbled in mathematics and physical sciences and could chop logic with the most learned of his courtiers But he would at the same time bring all trade to a standstill and empty his treasury by a crazy decree making copper coins pass for gold and silver He built hospitals and alms houses for Muslim widows and orphans—but added thousands to the number of

the unfortunate by deliberate cruelty. He said his prayers regularly and—an unheard-of thing in those days—begged the Khalif to certify to his orthodoxy. But he flayed his own nephew alive and sent the flesh cooked in rice to the miserable widow and children.

He depopulated Delhi in a fit of fury and tried to fill it again by a compulsory levy upon other towns. And waste many fertile country districts organised man hunts in the forests for exterminating the refugees and then distributed money to promote agriculture and commerce.

In spite of two great disasters due to his folly—a large army destroyed in Khorasan and another in an attempt to attack China through Tibet—he died in his bed after a reign of twenty-six years. But the Sultanate, distracted by famine and seething with rebellion, was already breaking up. The Moguls were unchecked in the Punjab and Sind—they had come once right up to the walls of Delhi. Bengal and a great part of the Deccan no longer paid tribute to the Sultan. In the south the Hindus, rallying under the banner of the Vijayanagar princes, formed a barrier which the Musalman armies did not pass until two centuries later.

Firōz Shah (1351–88) was Muhammad's cousin and had served under him as a provincial governor. His mother was a Rājput princess, who voluntarily resigned herself to a Muslim harem to save her people from a Turkish governor's tyranny. Her self-devotion was not in vain. Her son was imbued with intolerant Sunni ideas by his paternal relatives, but with the help of his chief minister, Khān Jahān—another recruit from Hinduism—Firōz did much to relieve the miseries of Hindustan. The *jizya*, or poll tax, was imposed upon Brahmans who had hitherto been exempt, and the Sultan placated his Sunni adherents by playing the role of Grand Inquisitor towards both Musalmans and Hindus. But the ryots were relieved from punitive taxation. The country enjoyed peace during the greater part of his reign. Agriculture and commerce revived. Irrigation works, including a great canal connecting the

Jumna and the Sutlaj, were constructed. Many towns with schools, mosques and hospitals were built or restored under the sultan's orders. A new Delhi, Fīrozābad, was named after the sultan. Jaunpur, afterwards a great seat of Muslim learning, was dedicated to his ferocious cousin Junā's (Muhammad Tughlak) memory, with the pious wish that God might be merciful to him. The indiscriminate slaughter, mutilation and torture of prisoners of war and others in which previous sultans had delighted were forbidden. Slaves were trained in handicrafts and taught to be good Musalmans. Other Hindus were induced by special indulgences, such as relief from the poll tax, to come over to Islam.

After Fīroz Shah's death in 1388 anarchy reigned in Delhi owing to disputes regarding the succession, while the provincial governors divided the Sultanate between themselves.

Ten years later the Moguls with their Turkish allies under Timur<sup>1</sup> swarmed through the passes of the Hindu Kush, and this time the tornado of rapine and blood lust not only swept in a wide circle through the Punjab but overwhelmed Delhi itself. Again thousands of Hindu artisans and women were transported to assist in rebuilding and repopling the cities of Persia and Turkestan under Timur's rule, while plague and famine added to the miseries of Hindustan.

Amid the turmoil and desolation of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Hindustan there were spiritual forces working for a *modus vivendi* if not for complete reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism. The influence of Indian women in Musalman harems must be counted as one of the chief. They were always prized in the Muslim slave market for their beauty and accomplishments. The traditional devotion and tenderness of Indian motherhood helped greatly to soften the ferocity of the Turk and Mogul nomad. The sufferings which fell *not only upon all classes of Hindu society* but even upon many Muslims—for the Turkish and Mogul

<sup>1</sup> Timur himself was a Turk who claimed descent from Chingiz Khan and (by a miraculous birth) from the Khalif Ali.

war lords by no means always spared the true believer—stirred deeply the religious feelings of the people. Men and women of all castes who had suffered as much as human nature can endure felt drawn together in a common bond of sympathy. The Muslim Sufi who read into the Qurān Christian and Indian mysticism and sought the Path (*ṭarīqa*) in hunger, solitude and silence, had closer kinship with the destitute heart-broken idolater than with the stiff-necked mullah of the sultan's Court.

The teacher who came forward to voice the spirit of the times was Rāmanand, a Brahman outcaste who followed Ramanuja's school of philosophy but broke away entirely from the caste rules hitherto imposed by Brahman schools. The only qualification he demanded of his disciples, who were to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood, was the perfect bhakti or faith in God in which all distinctions both of caste and sex were to be merged. High caste and low caste took their meals together, the Brahman and Rājput with the despised Chamar.<sup>1</sup> Two women and a Musalman were among his chelas. He taught only in the vernacular (Hindi) and in a language understood by both Muslim and Hindu—the story of Rama and of Sitā's devotion, used as a symbol of Divine love, went to the heart of the Sufi who sang the sorrows of Majnun and Laila.

Ramanand probably lived through all the stormy period of the Tughlak sultans. He died about 1411. Kabir (*d.* 1518), his most famous disciple, went even further than his master in denunciation of idolatry and of Brahman rites and ceremonies. "Both the Purana and the Qurān," he said, "are mere words to me."

Within the fold of Brahman orthodoxy the effect of the Muhammadan conquest was far different. It strengthened the rigours of caste and made the seclusion of women more strict. It greatly increased the despotic power of the rājas, both of those who became the sultan's feudatories and those

<sup>1</sup> Currier, or leather worker.

who continued the fight. In the former case the sultan's will was more powerful than dharma and the rājā became a pliant tool in the hands of the Musalman oppressor. In the latter all the time honoured limitations of royal authority disappeared under the stress of constant warfare with an implacable foe.

Among other effects must be noticed the intellectual stagnation which characterised Brahmanism after the beginning of the twelfth century. Scientific knowledge became stereotyped. Brahman astronomers, mathematicians, chemists and other investigators stopped at the results already reached. Islam in India produced no original thinkers to carry on the work of Hindu scientists and brought no fresh contribution to Indian philosophy or psychological study.

helped the growth of vernacular literature—already greatly stimulated by the teaching of Rāmānand and Kabir—by ordering the translation of the Sanskrit epics and other works to be made for the diversion of the Court. Their example was followed by the Hindu princes who were subject to them. Hindus of the higher classes learnt Persian and studied Muhammadan literature. This reconciliation of Musalman and Hindu and the necessities of daily intercourse, led gradually to the formation of a common language—Urdu, which, as its name signifies, was at first a camp jargon formed by a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Turki with Hindi, the local vernacular of Delhi. Through the writings of the Court poets and historians it developed a literary form and became the *lingua franca* of Indian Musalmans.

### CHAPTER III

INDIA AFTER TĪMŪR'S RAID—THE SAYYID AND LODĪ DYNASTIES OF DELHI—PROVINCIAL DYNASTIES GUJARĀT, MĀLWĀ, GAUR, ETC.—CHAITANYA AND MUHAMMADAN REFORMERS—THE DYNASTIES OF THE DECCAN—THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

For a century after the great raid by which Tīmūr and his descendants established a claim to the sovereignty of Hindustan, India was the playground of all the soldiers of fortune whom Islam rallied to its standard. Arabian, Turkish, Georgian, Circassian, Afghan, Abyssinian, Persian, Mogul and other generals of Indian birth fought with each other or, by way of diversion, waged holy war against the only two considerable Hindu powers which remained to resist the invaders—in the north a confederacy of Rājput chieftains under the leadership of the Rānā of Mewār, and in the south the Vijayanagar empire. Those who won the chief prizes in the

game founded petty dynasties, built new capitals with splendid mosques and tombs, and squeezed the Hindu peasantry as much as their inclinations or the needs of warfare required. The less fortunate ones became governors of districts and landed proprietors, or attached themselves to the royal body-guard, where there was always a chance of winning the sultan's favour or of stepping into his shoes.

The strict ritualistic discipline imposed on the forces of Islam took the place of caste, racial, or national feeling in giving cohesion to their motley bands of mercenaries, but religion generally played a secondary part in the politics of the period. The sultans frequently enlisted Hindu soldiers in their armies or accepted the aid of Hindu princes in fights with their Musalman neighbours; this did not prevent them from turning against the idolaters and smashing their temples when it so pleased them.

For half a century after Timūr's return to his capital, Samarkand, the Delhi Sultanate practically ceased to exist. The last of the Tughlaks, Mahmūd, returned to Delhi and lived there until his death in 1412. Then the city was seized by Khizr Khān, Timūr's viceroy in the Punjab, and three of his descendants, known as the Sayyid dynasty on account of their supposed relationship with the Prophet, ruled until 1450 when an Afghan governor of the Punjab, Bahlōl Khān Lodī, resumed the Sultanate and restored some of its pristine dignity by reannexing the Jaunpur or Eastern (Sharkī) province, which since Timūr's invasion had had its own independent shahs. The Lodī line represented the Delhi sultans until Bābur appeared on the scene. But the former provinces of the empire, Gujarāt, Mālwa and Gaur, under their independent sultans and shahs, were the stronger powers. Their chequered history contains many romantic incidents but it is not politically important.

Gaur, the Musalman kingdom which had its seat at the city of that name, founded on the ruins of Lakhnauti, the Hindu capital, embraced Bihār and the lower provinces of Bengal, but



was distinct from the Sharhī or Eastern province before mentioned whose capital was Jaunpur. From 1338 to 1393 various Musalman generals played the part of shah without distinction, only resisting the efforts of the Delhi sultans to exact tribute. Otherwise Gaur remained so aloof from the rest of Hindustan that in 1392 a Hindu feudatory Rajā Kans was accepted as their ruler by the Musalman chiefs. His son probably influenced by the Brahmanical ostracism which his father had incurred, voluntarily embraced Islam. A period of religious bigotry and persecution intervened but by the end of the fifteenth century the spirit of Kabir's teaching prevailed and an enlightened Arab, Alauddin Husain, who reigned as shah from 1493 to 1518, won the respect and esteem of his Hindu subjects. Through his influence and that of his son, Nusrat, who succeeded him, several of the Sanskrit classics, including the *Mahabhārata* and the *Bhagavata*, were translated into Bengali for the first time. The *Rāmāyana* had been previously translated by a Bengali Brahman, Krittivāsa, in the time of Rāmanand. To Husain Shah is attributed the origin of a cult called Satva Pir intended to unite Hindus and Musalmans in divine worship. It was in this atmosphere of religious toleration that Chaitanya (1486–1534), the great Vaishnava teacher of Bengal, was born. He is said to have counted many Musalmans among his followers.

The Musalman colleges of Jaunpur, the capital of the short-lived Sharhī dynasty (1394–1477), produced two noted religious reformers, the Shaikh 'Ālāi, who was done to death for his opinions in the reign of the Afghan Sultan of Delhi, Salim or Islām Shah (1545–53), and Shaikh Mubarak, Akbar's friend and counsellor.

Gujarāt, whose sultans were of Rajput origin, had its capital at Ahmadābād, a splendid city built by the third sultan, Ahmad Shah (1411–41). The restoration of Rājput rule, and the consequent release from the tyranny of Delhi, quickly made the province the richest and most powerful of the Musalman states, though the slur on Rājput honour which the first

sultan, Mubārak, left to his posterity,<sup>1</sup> prevented any reconciliation with the Rānā of Chitōr and other staunch Hindus. The independence of Gujarāt was formally recognised by the Lodi Sultan of Delhi in 1509, and a few years afterwards Shah Ismail of Persia sent an embassy to Ahmadābād. But these incidents and the wars with its Rājput neighbours and with the sultans of Mālwa, Khāndesh<sup>2</sup> and Ahmadnagar are of little historic interest compared with the epoch making event of the sixteenth century, the coming of the Portuguese—the first European power to establish itself in India since the days of Alexander. This will be dealt with in another chapter.

The Muhammadan dynasty of Mālwa was Turkish—its capital first at Dhar and afterwards at Mandū, an imposing fortified plateau overlooking the Narbadā valley. Kashmir came under Musalman rule early in the fourteenth century, but owing to its isolated position it played no important part in Muhammadan times except as a hot weather resort for the Mogul emperors.

The first independent state in the Deccan under the Bahmani dynasty,<sup>3</sup> repeated the history of the Delhi Sultanate. It was founded in 1347 by Hasan, or Zafur Khān, a Turkish or Afghan general, who with the help of the Rājā of Telungana threw off the abominable yoke of Muhammad Tughlak. Then the inhabitants of Maharāshtra lived through another long period of tyranny during which the magnificence of the Court at Kulbarga and Bidar and the unbridled self indulgence of an arrogant military aristocracy only threw into a more lurid light the misery of the servile population which supported them. The annals of the dynasty tell the usual dreary tale of murderous intrigue, savage cruelty, debauchery and devastating war and famine, relieved only by the fine character of

<sup>1</sup> He had saved his life by embracing Islam.

<sup>2</sup> Khāndesh was a Muhammadan principality in the Tapti valley, founded in 1388 by the Farukhi dynasty. Its capital was Burhanpur.

<sup>3</sup> The founder claimed descent from an ancient Persian king Bahman.

Mahmūd Gāwan, the great Persian minister of Muhammad Shah III (1463-82), who was killed by his drunken master

Soon afterwards the chief Amīrs of the Deccan, native and foreign, took advantage of the rottenness of the Sultanate to assert their independence. One after another five petty Sultanates were formed. 1 The Imād Shāhī of Berār, founded by a converted Hindu. 2 The Nizām Shāhī of Ahmadnagar, whose founder was a Marāthā Brahman. 3 The Ādil Shāhī of Bijāpur, of Turkish origin. 4 The Barīd Shāhī of Bīdar, representing the residue of the Bahmanī kingdom. 5 The Kutb Shāhī of Golconda, also Turkish.

The Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar came into being after 1336, when the chief Hindu fortresses in the Deccan had been taken by Muhammad Tughlak. The defeated forces of Telingana and Mysore were rallied on the south bank of the Tungabhadra river by the five sons of Sangama, a Telugu or Kanarese chieftain. The eldest, Harihara I, founded the city of Vijayanagar and the first of several dynasties under whose suzerainty the Southern Indian principalities held up the Musalman armies for over two centuries. Early in the sixteenth century, under Krishna Deva, it was the dominant power in the Deccan, but in 1565 it fell before a combined attack of the sultans of Bijāpur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bīdar, all of whom had previously made use of the Hindu armies in their quarrels with each other.

In the dark days of the fourteenth century, when the Hindu cause might have seemed hopeless, two Brahman brothers, Mādhava and Sāyana, who served as ministers to Bukka I and Harihara II, set themselves the task of preserving for posterity the sacred literature which formed the basis of Vedic religion. Mādhava (b. 1319) made a compendium of Sanskrit philosophy, the *Sarvādarsana-samgraha*, while Sāyana (d. 1387) wrote an exegesis of a number of Vedic texts, including the *Rig-Veda*, the *Atareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Āranyaka*. These works are among the most important contributions to Sanskrit scholarship now extant.

Philosophical research did not, however, revive Vedic ideals of life or the spirit of Āryan polity. Pressure from without made the empire of Vijayanagar a military despotism, and Hinduism, like Islam, was infected by the corruption of a time of violent passions engendered by brutal warfare. But trade and industry flourished greatly under the protection of the Rāyas. Their magnificent city was one of the most important commercial centres of the East and a city of refuge for all Hindus, until it was utterly destroyed by the allied sultans of the Deccan in 1565, after the battle of Tālikota.

Before this happened, Timūr's descendants had made good their claim to the throne of Delhi, and the maritime powers of Western Europe had begun to challenge the monopoly of Eastern trade then held by the Ottoman Turks and Venetians.

## CHRONOLOGY OF NORTHERN INDIA,

circa A.D. 900-1526

A.D.

- c. 933-4 Old Delhi founded
- 986-7 Sabuktigin's raids into the Punjab
- 997-1030 Mahmud, Sultan of Ghazni
- 1001-26 Mahmud's Indian raids
- 1114 Bhaskaracharya, astronomer, b.
- 1150 Alauddin Ghorī, Sultan of Ghazni
- 1173-1206 Muhammad Ghorī, Sultan of Ghazni.
- 1191 Muhammad Ghorī defeated by Prithvī raj
- 1192 Muhammad Ghorī victorious at second battle of Taran.
- 1193 Kutb ud dīn Aibak occupies Delhi
- 1197-99 Muhammad Khiljī overruns Bihar and Bengal.
- 1206 Kutb ud dīn founds the Slave dynasty of Delhi
- 1221-22 Mogul invasions.
- 1290-6 Jalaluddin (Firoz Shah) founds Khiljī dynasty of Delhi
- 1294 Alāuddin raids the Deccan and succeeds Jalaluddin
- 1297-1305 Mogul invasions
- 1302-11 Malik Kafur overruns Southern India, sacks Dvārakā mudra (Mysore), Kanchī and Madurai.
- 1321 Ghiyasuddin founds Tughlak dynasty of Delhi
- 1325-51 Muhammad Tughlak
- 1351-88 Firōz Shah Tughlak
- 1347 The Deccan independent of the Delhi Sultanate.

## A D

- 1388 General break up of the Sultanate
- 1398 Timur invades India
- 1399 Jaunpur independent under the Sharhi dynasty
- c 1411 Ramanand d
- 1414-50 Sayyid dynasty of Delhi
- 1450-1506 Lodi dynasty of Delhi
- 1506 Babur wins the battle of Panipat

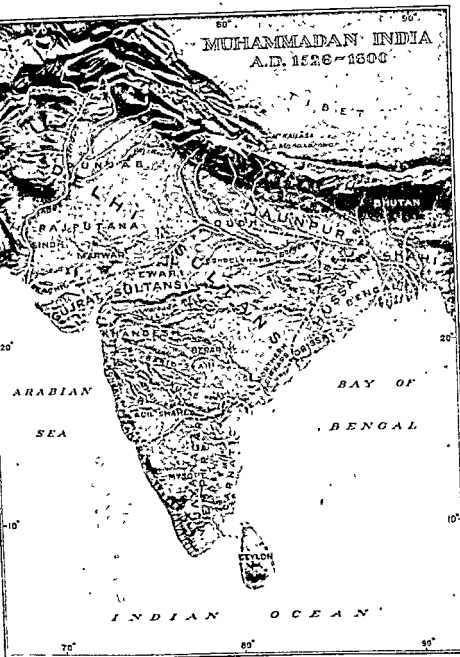
## SOUTHERN INDIA

- c 1336 Vijayanagar empire founded
- c 1340-87 Madhava and Sayana Vedic scholars
- 1347 1506 Bahmani Sultanate of the Deccan
- 1490-1512 Break up of the Bahmani Sultanate
- 1498 Vasco da Gama at Calicut
- 1510 Albuquerque captures Goa

## CHAPTER IV

BABUR AND ALBUQUERQUE—HUMĀYŪN AND SHER SHAH—  
SALIM OR ISLAM SHAH

THE efforts of the Western European powers to reopen by way of the sea the ancient Āryan connections with India and of the Moguls to possess themselves of India's riches by land conquest began almost simultaneously. The most prominent figures in these two great adventures Albuquerque, a scion of the royal house of Portugal, and Bābur, the Mogul chieftain, were both men of genius. But while the former movement gradually



Babur prince of Terghana or Khokand in Central Asia was not concerned in Western politics but the Portuguese attack was a diversion in his favour for the Ottoman Sultan Selim I himself had designs upon India. His conquests in Persia and bitter hatred of the Persian Shahs made him a dangerous neighbour for the Mogul. Selim's claim to be the heir of Abbasid Khalifs was moreover directly opposed to that of Babur's ancestor Timur who pretended to represent the family of the Shah Khalif Ali.

After Vasco da Gama and his associates had shown the way to the Malabar coast in 1498 and all Portugal had been thrilled by reports of Christian communities in India, Albuquerque in command of a naval squadron built a fort at Cochin by permission of the Zamorin, took Goa from the Bijapur Sultan (1510) and Diu from Gujarat, established fortified stations at Ormuz and Socotra commanding the Persian Gulf and Red Sea respectively. The trade route to the Far East was secured by fortified factories at Colombo and Malacca. The Turkish, Egyptian and Gujarati fleets were driven off the seas by the better seamanship and artillery of the Portuguese, and before Albuquerque died at sea in 1518, broken down by the intrigues of his enemies at home, the whole current of maritime trade between East and West had been diverted from its ancient channels leading to the Mediterranean to the Cape route leading to the Atlantic seaboard. The economic revolution which this involved opened a new book of fate for India and for Europe. The mastery of the sea consummated by the mariners of the sixteenth century was an uplift for the human race and a new world was in the making. The Āryans who in the dawn of history had opened the great land ways of the East now began to pioneer the ocean ways. There were few saints or seers among them. So it was with Islam and so, no doubt, with the Vedic Āryans. But they had behind them the *dynamis*, the subconscious power which works ultimately for the universal good.

Babur possessed a more striking and picturesque personality

than any of the Portuguese sea captains. His fascinating memoirs are a unique contribution to the history of the period. The Mogul land conquest, however, had not the same *historical significance as the Āry in conquest of the seas*. It was only the climax of the long sequence of invasions which began with the forcing of the land gates of Āryāvarta by the nomads of Central Asia. After capturing and losing twice his ancestral capital, Samarkand, Babur in 1504 seized Kabul and other Afghan fortresses. Sikandar Lodi, a capable soldier and administrator, was then on the throne of Delhi. Babur waited while he organised his mounted bowmen and artillery. In 1517 Sikandar died, and his stupid and inexperienced son, Ibrahim, succeeded. A few years later Bābur was in the Punjab with only 10 000 picked horsemen but a strong force of artillery. He was a born cavalry leader and knew how to use his guns, which had begun to be the decisive weapon both on land and sea. In 1526 he *smashed Ibrahim's ill led host* on the field of Panipat. The sultan fell in the fight and Bābur entered Delhi and Agra. The next year, near Fatehpur Sikri, he completely defeated the Rānā Sanga of Chitor, who, mistrusting the Mogul strangers more than Indians and Afghans, rallied all the Rajput forces to the support of Muhammad Ibrahim's brother. In 1529 Babur beat the *Afghan chiefs* of Bihār on the banks of the Gogra River, near *Burr*.



garden palace near Agra, to repair the roads and to reorganise his kingdom. His four young sons assisted him as provincial governors, and the officers who had shared his chequered fortunes from his boyhood were rewarded with fiefs or *jāgirs*. Bābur's untimely death in 1530 less than five years after he had been proclaimed as Pādshah at Delhi left the Moguls with a very precarious foothold in India. Humāyūn, Bābur's eldest son and heir to the throne, had possession of the treasury at Agra, but his brother Kāmran, who held Kābul and thus cut him off from the Mogul base in the north west, promptly seized the Punjab. His other two brothers Hindāl and Askarī played a similarly selfish game with results disastrous both to Humāyūn and themselves. The powerful Sultan of Gujrāt, Bahādūr Shah, and Shēr Khān, one of the Afghan chiefs settled in Bihār who had submitted to Bābur, were both aiming at the overlordship of Hindustan, using the relatives of the late Lodi Sultan of Delhi as stalking horses. Humāyūn, who was not lacking in courage, first disposed of Ibrahim, Lodi's brother, and then conducted a brilliant campaign against the Gujrāt Sultan, who had previously conquered Mālhwā and taken the great Mewar stronghold, Chitor. He was, however, no match for Shēr Khān's strategy and cunning. In 1539 he was badly beaten by the Afghans at Chausā, near Buxar. Nine months afterwards a decisive defeat at Kanauj made him a fugitive dependent on the chivalrous assistance of some of the Rajput chieftains. Kamran made terms with the victorious Afghan, giving up the Punjab on condition of being allowed to retain Kābul.

Humāyūn offended his Rājput friends by his tactless behaviour, and eventually, in 1544, had to place himself under the protection of the Shah of Persia to escape from his intriguing brothers. He thus disappeared from Indian politics for about eleven years. But in the course of his wanderings he had entered into a romantic love match with a Persian lady, Hamida Bano Begam, and before leaving Indian soil a son and heir was born to him at Umarnkot, a fortress on the borders

of Sind This child of the desert grew up to be the real founder of the Mogul Empire in India, Akbar the Great

Shēr Khān's victory at Kanaūj put the Sultanate of Delhi, together with Binār and Bengal, into the hands of the Afghan tribe of Sūr for fifteen years The only distinguished ruler of that line, Sher Shah, or Shēr Khān himself, enjoyed, like Bābur, a brief reign of five years He was a strict Sunni Musliman, with great intelligence, restless energy and iron will His experience as manager of his father's jāgīr had taught him that the traditional methods of the hereditary revenue officials (kanungos) deprived the state treasury of a large amount of its dues He therefore regulated the assessment of his land revenue by an exact system of land measurement, and protected as far as possible industrious ryots from unauthorised demands and wanton injury to their crops by stringent regulations, enforced with a rigid military discipline Law and order were maintained with cruel severity, whoever the offender might be—a prince of the royal house, an oppressive zamindar or an obstinate ryot His revenue assessment, about one fourth of the crops, was considered a moderate one He encouraged trade by improving the coinage and keeping the highways in good order But his statesmanship had no higher aim than to satisfy the cupidity of his own countrymen by lavish distribution of *largesse* and to create a war machine which might crush for ever the power of the Hindu princes In his dealings with the latter he recognised no code of honour or humanity He treacherously massacred the Rājput garrison of Raisin, after a solemn pledge of safe conduct, and consigned the Rāja's daughter and three boys, his nephews, to the vilest outrages Such conduct naturally only stiffened the Hindu resistance, and though he took Mālwā from the Gujarāt Sultan, and several Rājput fortresses, he narrowly escaped disaster in a campaign against Maldeo, the Mahārājā of Marwār In 1545 he was killed during the siege of the Chandel fortress of Kālīnjar The memory of this great landlord is perpetuated by a noble monument on his family estate at Sahasram—one of

the many splendid temples dedicated to the cult of one man rule upon which the Indian sultans lavished the riches they wrung from the long suffering ryot

The only noteworthy event in the eight years' reign of Shēr Shah's successor, Salim or Islam Shah (1545-53) was a socialist religious movement, based upon the teaching of the Qurān started by the Shaikh Ālāī. His eloquence roused the fanaticism of the Punjab mob and serious disturbances occurred. The Shaikh defied the authority of the Sultan and was eventually beaten to death by his orders.

Then, as usual the Sur dynasty fell by the profligacy and folly of its members. A year after Islām Shah's death, three Afghan factions were engaged in a murderous struggle for supremacy, the strongest man being a Hindu merchant, Hemu, nominally acting as commander in chief in Bengal for Adil Shah, nicknamed Adalī "the Fool," a brother in law of Islam Shah.

Such was the situation when Humāyūn who had secured the aid of Shah Tahmasp by binding himself to propagate Shiāh doctrines in India had fought his way back to Kābul with a Persian army and put out his brother Kāmran's eyes to prevent further treachery. A message from India urged him to push his advantage further. His staunch friend, Bairām Khān, a Turkish general who had joined Humāvun in exile, came to his aid with a body of Mogul troopers. In 1556 Humāyūn re entered Delhi and was again proclaimed Padshah of Hindustan. Seven months later he fell down the staircase of his palace and died from the effects of his injuries. Bairam Khan and his ward, Akbar, a boy of thirteen, were left to maintain the claims of the house of Tīmūr against its many rivals, Muslim and Hindu.

## CHAPTER V

AKBAR AND THE MAKING OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE—IBRĀHĪM  
ĀDIL SHAH II OF BĪJĀPUR

BAIRĀM'S loyalty and military skill saved Akbar's life and throne in a situation of great difficulty and danger. Thereafter Akbar's own fine character and achievements were the making of the Mogul Empire. Schooled from his earliest years, like Babur, in a rough soldiers' camp, he escaped the usual demoralising atmosphere of the royal harem. The ordinary royal tutors drill, calligraphy and reading, he obstinately shirked, and remained illiterate all his life. But he loved to have books read to him and learnt much Sūfī poetry by heart, thereby developing a wonderful memory and a bent of mind which influenced his ideas of statecraft. He grew up to manhood with a robust constitution and prodigious physical strength, combining reckless daring with an intuitive military genius which made him the terror of his enemies and the idol of his own soldiers. His "happy sayings," recorded by Abul Fazl, reflect some of his spiritual struggles and his efforts towards self conquest. In his youth he was a keen sportsman, but later in life he gave up hunting and restricted the slaughter of animals. A mystic by temperament, he plunged eagerly into the discussion of metaphysical problems with religious men of all sects. He was also keenly interested in music, painting and mechanical arts. To all affairs of State, civil as well as military, he gave the closest personal attention. Ability and trustworthiness were the only passports for promotion in his service. He was, it was said by one of the Jesuit priests<sup>1</sup> who attended his Court for many years, 'great with the great and lowly with the lowly.'

At the time of Humayun's death Bairam was with Akbar in his

<sup>1</sup> Father Jerome Xavier

charge was in the Punjab chasing one of Shēr Shah's nephews, Sikandar, after he had been driven out of Delhi. Hēmū, advancing from Bengal with a great army of Afghan and Rājput allies, was a much more formidable antagonist. At first he carried all before him. Agra fell and then Delhi where Hēmū proclaimed himself emperor under the traditional Hindu title of Rājā Vikramajit (Vikramāditya). But when he moved out, into districts stricken by a great famine, to attack the rest of the Mogul forces which rallied round the youthful Pādshāh, his fortune deserted him. Bairām's advanced guard surprised and captured his whole park of artillery. In the pitched battle which took place, November 5, 1526, on the plains of Pānīpat, the Moguls, outnumbered by more than five to one, were nearly overwhelmed by a tremendous charge of elephants, when Hēmū was blinded and knocked senseless by an arrow, and the tide of victory turned. His army fled, and 1500 elephants with an enormous booty fell into the victors' hands. The dying Hēmū was taken prisoner and despatched in Bairām's and Akbar's presence.<sup>1</sup> Delhi and Agra were again in the hands of the Moguls.

For three and a half years more Bairām, as Protector of the realm, continued the conflict until Ajmēr, Gwalior and Jaunpur were occupied and the rest of the Sūr family were disposed of. Sikandar Sūr, who submitted, was given a jāgīr in Bengal. At the age of eighteen Akbar, chafing under the restraints of Bairām's authority, dismissed the Protector and took the government into his own hands. The Khān, who resented the insolence of Akbar's envoy, rebelled. He was defeated and taken prisoner, graciously pardoned by his sovereign and sent off to Mecca, but on his way to the coast a revengeful Afghan waylaid and killed him. His son, Abdurrahīm, rose to the highest rank in Akbar's service and married a daughter of Prince Dāniyāl.

Mālwa was conquered in 1561-62. The turning point in

<sup>1</sup> Whether Akbar, at Bairām's bidding, joined in the outrage, or chivalrously refused, is a detail upon which the evidence is conflicting.

Akbar's career came with his marriage early in the latter year with the daughter<sup>1</sup> of his father's Rājput friend, Rājā Bihārī Mall, chief of Amber, after shaking off the influence of his intriguing foster mother, Maham Anaga, and her disreputable associates. From that time Akbar kept steadfastly in view the Hindu ideal of a Chakravartin or of India united under one sovereign ruler, not by conquest alone but by the willing obedience of all his subjects. Only Husain Shah of Gaur and a few minor sultans of Hindustan had seriously attempted to forge the political, social and religious ties by which Islam and Hinduism might be mutually reconciled. The approach in that direction had hitherto been mostly from below and from the Hindu side. The strict Sunni Musalman was always resolutely opposed to any concession to the infidel.

The account of Akbar's military conquests extending over forty years must be relegated to the chronological table, though his much more important administrative reforms would have been impossible but for the enormous prestige he won by his successes in the battle field. Ambitious viceroys, rebellious generals, intriguing relatives and fanatical mullās were taught that no one in Hindustan could wield the sword better than the Pādshāh himself. The only effective stand against his victorious arms was made by the Rānā Partāp Singh with his devoted Rājputs in the hills of Mewār. In every difficult and important enterprise Akbar was himself in the field, leading the van. He bore a charmed life and his exploits became popular legends, like those of the Pāndava heroes. Nearly half his soldiers and several of his best generals, e.g. Bhagavān Das, Man Singh and Todar Mall, were Hindus. Except when treachery or disobedience called for exemplary punishment, Akbar was willing to convert an enemy into an ally by giving him an honourable place in his service.

Within a year of his marriage with the Rājput princess he

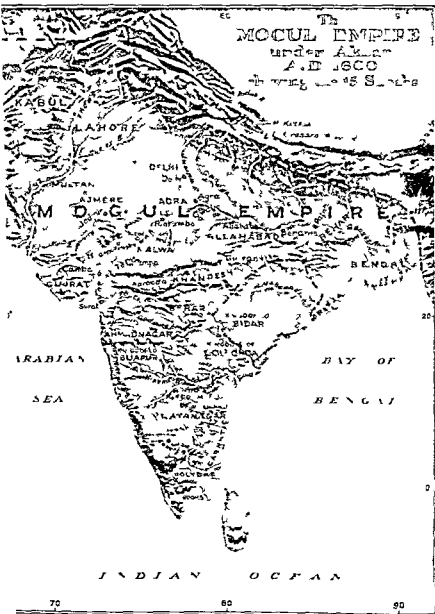
<sup>1</sup> Known as Maryam zamani. The Mary of the Age. She was the mother of Jahangir.

abolished one of the time honoured institutions sanctioned by the Prophet himself, the enslavement of prisoners of war. Not long afterwards (1563-64) he startled the Ulamā, his Muslim legal advisers, by relieving Hindus of two specially galling taxes—the one on pilgrims and the other the poll tax, or *jizya*, originally instituted by the Khalif Omar. He was well repaid for the great sacrifice of revenue by the willing and loyal service of his Rājput adherents. Akbar then commenced to put the state finances in order and ensure the regular payment of his army by dismissing corrupt officials and introducing gradually a long series of revenue reforms (1565-80) on the lines of Shēr Shah's settlement. In this work Itimād Khan, Muzaffar Khān Turbātī and afterwards Todar Mall,<sup>1</sup> a Hindu revenue official who had attracted Akbar's notice by his honesty and ability, were his chief technical advisers. The lands were first carefully measured, then classified according to the average produce. The Government share was fixed at one third of the average crop, nominally higher than Shēr Shah's assessment, but not really so when the abolition of the *jizya* and of numerous extra cesses is taken into account. In Babur's time there was no limit to the extortion of revenue collectors except when the ryots fled to the forests and left their fields uncultivated. Akbar's firm rule, the prestige of his name, and the care he took in the appointment and control of his officials gradually restored the confidence of the ryot and made the Pādshāh the richest monarch of his age.<sup>2</sup> The ryot paid his taxes in money or kind directly to the krom, or district revenue officer, instead of through the zamindar or the headman of his village.

Towards the end of his reign Akbar's suzerainty was acknowledged by all the surviving rulers of Northern India,

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently created Raja and Vakil of the Empire. As a general he took the leading part in the suppression of the Afghan revolt in Bengal (1580).

<sup>2</sup> It has been estimated that Akbar's land revenue alone at the close of his reign, amounted to about £20 000,000 sterling annually, present value.





The Muhammadan world was at this time in a state of ferment at the approach of the millennium of the Hijra and the expected appearance of the Mahdī, who, according to prophecy, was to be the Khalif of the new age and make Islam a universal religion. A pretended Mahdī had appeared in the north west and roused the fanaticism of the Afghan tribesmen. The religious fervour excited by Chaitanya's mission in Bengal and by the teaching of the Sikh Guru Nānak (1469–1539) in the Punjab had affected both Musalmans and Hindus. Learned and devout Muslims began to throw themselves into the study of comparative religion. Akbar's alert mind was seized by the spirit of the age. Soon after he had started to build a new capital at Fatehpur Sikri to celebrate the birth of a son and heir (Prince Salim, 1569), the Shaikh Mubārak, reputed to be the most learned man in Islam, sought protection at Akbar's Court from the persecutions of the Sunni mullas. The Shaikh and his two able sons, Faizī, poet and physician, and Abul Fazl, a theological student, became Akbar's intimates.

With their help the Pādshāh collected a great library of books on history, philosophy, religion and science, translated into Persian from Sanskrit, Greek and Arabic, which were read to him by the librarians and illustrated by the Court painters. He also inaugurated formal discussions on religion and theology, at first open to his Muslim courtiers only, but later on to Brahmans, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and others who were in the Mogul service or had been specially invited to the Court. Akbar was intensely curious to understand the religion of the foreigners, who were equally formidable on land and sea,<sup>1</sup> by whose leave only the Mogul pilgrim ships could sail to the Red Sea ports. He thought, perhaps,

<sup>1</sup> In 1570 Goa was attacked by the combined armies of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, elated by their triumphant campaign against the Vijayanagar empire five years before. But a garrison of 700 Portuguese, aided by a few hundred civilians held the city for ten months until the siege was raised.

he might learn the secret of the psychic power which made the Portuguese gunners better than his own. In 1580 a Jesuit mission at Akbar's invitation arrived at Fatehpur and remained at Court for three years. In the meantime Akbar tired of the violent wrangling of the Muslim doctors of divinity, had obtained from them a decree drafted by Shaikh Mubārak, recognising the Padshāh's ruling in religious questions as final, provided that it was supported by a verse from the Qurān and of benefit to the nation.

The Jesuit fathers were treated with extraordinary respect, but they were disappointed in their efforts, followed up by two subsequent missions to win Akbar as a convert. Though Christian principles, as presented by the Gospels, seemed to attract him strongly, the mentality of the missionaries was too like that of the Sunni mullās to appeal to Akbar's religious sense. The Jesuit Order in Portugal had already strangled the humanist teaching of the national university at Coimbra and introduced the horrors of the Inquisition into Goa. Akbar, as a statesman, could not find in Christian dogma the means of making a united India.

Political unrest in the provinces was, moreover, constantly distracting his attention from this all-absorbing subject. In 1580-81 Akbar, by a strenuous campaign, foiled a dangerous conspiracy to supplant him by his worthless, but orthodox, half brother, Muhammad Hakim, the Padshah's representative at Kabul, after hanging in the face of the army his own Finance Minister, Shah Mansūr, who was thrice detected in treasonable correspondence with the rebels.

At last Akbar resolved to cut the Gordian knot by virtually assuming the position for which no other man in Islam seemed better qualified—that of the expected Mahdī, or spiritual guide. Under the name of *Tauhid Ilahī*, the Divine Unity, or *Din Ilahī*, the Divine Faith, he created an Imperial Order in four grades, the members of which were pledged to acknowledge the Padshāh as their spiritual leader and to devote to the service of the state their property, lives, honour and religion.

The monotheistic principles of Islam were recognised, but the ritual prescribed was eclectic, adapted mostly from Zoroastrian worship. The members were expected to abstain from meat. The Pādshāh also favoured the Christian custom of monogamy—"To seek for more than one wife," he said, "is to work one's own undoing."<sup>1</sup> No one was to be forced to join the Order. Rajā Man Singh was among the prominent Hindus who refused. Akbar really went no further than to define more precisely the position which almost every emperor of Hindustan had tacitly assumed. The Hindu bhakti tradition had always made a Chakravartin Vishnu's Vicegerent on earth. With few exceptions every great Indian sultan was his own Khalif.

Akbar reigned thirteen years after the proclamation of the *Dīn Ilāhī*. Among his social regulations were the prevention of forcible *satī* and the prohibition of the circumcision of children before the age of twelve. The slaughter of oxen, buffaloes, horses and camels was also forbidden. He outlined a curriculum of moral and scientific instruction for Muslim schools to replace the conventional Arabic studies based only on the Qurān. He encouraged the study of Sanskrit and showed deep interest in scientific inquiry, but did not foresee the part which the printing of books was to play in the revival of learning. Apart from military road making and the improvement of the imperial mint, Akbar devised no great economic measures, though he took much care in the organisation of industry and in the regulation of prices. Some of the special requirements of the army and of the elaborate administrative machinery were supplied by nearly a hundred state factories (*karkhanahs*), each under the control of an official responsible to the High Steward of the Court (*Khān ī Samān*). No stigma of slavery was attached to Akbar's service. His great building enterprises drew numbers of skilled Hindu craftsmen from Rājputāna and Bengal. But the Hindu co-operative system was not recognised by Mogul polity. The self governing guilds,

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, "His Majesty's Wise Sayings"

which in pre Muhammadan times had formed one of the most influential estates of the realm took their orders from the Mogul officials. The village councillors who were addressed with the utmost deference by the agents of the great Chola rajas were allowed to regulate parochial affairs but could expect no consideration from the Faujdars<sup>1</sup> troopers if they showed an independent spirit. In the towns likewise Akbar made no attempt to revive the Hindu system of local self government. The Kotwal the chief police officer assumed the ancient functions of the guilds and of the elected municipal boards otherwise he only maintained order and enforced the decrees of the Padshah.

Nevertheless if Akbar's successors had built as wisely and religiously as he his efforts to create a national spirit akin to the bushido of Japan might have succeeded. Islam itself had grown out of even cruder beginnings. But the *Din Ilahi* as a state religion did not survive its founder. Shukh Mubarak and his two sons Todar Mall and most of Akbar's chief Hindu collaborators predeceased him. Akbar's many beneficent reforms once more revived the industry commerce and agriculture of Hindustan. In normal years food and other necessities of life were extremely cheap and plentiful but several severe famines occurred the worst being from 1595 to 1598 when Akbar's relief measures failed to prevent terrible suffering and loss of life. Mogul culture failed also to promote the independent urban life which gave the great impulse to European social and political progress. It created many flourishing and well built towns. Akbar's three capitals—Agra Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore—were greater than the London of the sixteenth century. But Akbar's Amirs and mansabdars were all land folk with no liking for enterprises overseas nor did he give any encouragement to his chief sea port Surat to compete with the Portuguese Dutch and English for the control of the sea ways. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch monopoly of the spice trade became

<sup>1</sup> The military officer in charge of a provincial subdivision

irritating to the good merchants of London, and a rise in the price of pepper determined them to trade directly with the East. In 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted them the Charter which led to the foundation of an empire far greater than Akbar's.

In one important respect Akbar builded better than he knew. Benares in his reign played no part in politics but unobtrusively renewed its ancient fame as the centre of India's intellectual life. Rājā Man Singh built a palace there, and under his patronage Tulsī Dās, the Vaishnava teacher and poet, wrote his famous *Rāma charita mūnasa*, which, says Sir G. Grierson; "is more familiar to every Hindu in Northern India than our Bible is to the average English peasant. There is not a Hindu of Hindōstan proper, whether prince or cottar, who does not know its most famous verses and whose common talk is not coloured by it. Its similes have entered even into the language of Indian Muslims, some of whose most ordinary idioms, though they know it not, made their first appearance in this work."<sup>1</sup>

Akbar's greatest failure was in the upbringing of his own children. The two younger princes, Murād and Dāniyal, quickly drank themselves to death. Salim's stronger constitution unfortunately saved him from the same fate. He lived to rebel against his father and to procure the murder of the Chancellor, Abul Fazl, in whose loyalty and ability he found the greatest obstacles to his own treacherous schemes. Undoubtedly Akbar's end was hastened by the bitter experiences of his later years. But on his death bed in 1605 a formal reconciliation with his only surviving son took place, and Salim's popularity with the army secured him the succession under the title of Jahāngīr, "the World Conqueror."

Ibrāhīm Ādil Shah II of Bijāpur, Akbar's and Jahāngīr's contemporary, is entitled to one of the highest places among the Musalman rulers of India. Following Akbar's example, he made no invidious distinction in his civil and military

<sup>1</sup> Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religions*

services between Hindus and Muslims. His revenue settlement was as efficient as Akbar's, and in one respect better, for the ryots could not understand Persian, in which Akbar's officers kept their accounts, whereas the Hindu accountants in the Bijapur service used their vernacular Marāthī. Like Akbar he risked the hostility of his Sunni adherents by interesting himself in the Hindu and Christian religions.

Ibrāhīm never crossed swords with Akbar, but his aunt, Chand Bibī, won herself imperishable fame among Indian women by her gallant defence of her native city, Ahmadnagar, against the Mogul army.

## CHAPTER VI

### JAHĀNGIR AND SHAH JAHĀN—DEGENERATION OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

JAHANGIR and his son, Shah Jahān, Akbar's proximate successors, were insignificant personalities compared with Akbar. But for his inborn artistic temperament and the splendour of his inheritance, Jahāngir would have been accounted a very brutal and vulgar despot. Mān Singh and other of Akbar's stalwarts had fixed their hopes upon Jahāngir's eldest son, Khusru, but this gifted and high minded prince, after being tortured and imprisoned by his father, was finally done to death in 1622 by his brother, Khurram (Shah Jahān).

The attractions of a beautiful Persian lady, Mihr un nisā, made a widow by Jahāngir's orders, conquered the "World Conqueror." Under the name of Nur Jahān, "Light of the World," she ruled the empire with the help of able but greedy relatives,<sup>1</sup> while Jahāngir went a hunting or bargained over his wine cups for European pictures and curios with the jovial English sea captain, Hawkins, and with James I's ambas-

<sup>1</sup> Her brother, Asaf Khan, was Wazir of the empire and her father Lord High Treasurer, or *Itimad-u-d daulah*.

sador, Sir Thomas Roe, in exchange for trading privileges Akbar's military machine held together fairly well for seventy five years after his death. The Mogul empire gradually increased territorially until most of the southern kingdoms poured their wealth into the Pādshāh's coffers, but its moral and spiritual decline dates from the death of Akbar.

Jahangir put down with fiendish ferocity a rebellion led by Khusrū and another by an Afghan chief in Bengal. His army, under Prince Khurram's command, ended for a time the long struggle with the Mewar state by forcing the Rāna Amar Singh to come to terms. The important fortress of Kangra was captured. But Kandahar was lost to Shah Abbās of Persia, and on the sea the Portuguese plundered the Mogul ships unhindered.

Jahāngir's religious pose varied according to circumstances. To secure his succession to the throne he professed himself an orthodox Muslim and broke off all intercourse with the Jesuit missionaries. A year afterwards they were in high favour at Court again. He decorated his palace with their pictures and used a Christian signet for stamping official documents. Later on, in retaliation for the piratical attacks of the Goanese ships, he ordered all Christian churches to be closed and imprisoned Father Jerome Xavier. He retained the loyalty of his Rājput allies by an easy indifference to their "idoltrous" practices, but helped to convert a peaceful religious movement into a powerful military caste by torturing to death the Sikh Guru, Arjun, who had dared to show pity for the unhappy Prince Khushrū. In the absence of any serious religious propaganda the high politics of the period, ignoring such trivialities as the command of the sea ways, centred on the succession to the throne. Nur Jahān favoured Prince Shahryar, Jahāngir's youngest son, who was married to her daughter by her first husband, Shīr Afghan. *Asaf Khan supported his own son in law, Shah Jahān.* Other possible candidates were Prince Parviz, Shah Jahān's elder brother, a drunkard like his father, and Jahāngir's grandson, Dāwar Bakhsh, or Bulāki, son of

Khushru Shah Jahan who was by far the strongest of the quartette determined to follow his father's example and make good his claim by rebellion. The imperial general Mahabat Khan with the help of the loyal Rajputs put the rebel army to flight and forced Shah Jahan to surrender his two sons as hostages for his future good behaviour. Several of the Amirs were the victims of the Padshah's fury.

Then the situation turned to comedy. Nur Jahan brought apparently frivolous charges against Mahabat Khan who retaliated by kidnapping Jahangir while the Court was on the road to Kabul. Nur Jahan led the imperial bodyguard to the rescue but was driven back. Unable to beat him with his own weapons she coaxed Mahabat Khan to permit her to share her husband's captivity. The Khan weakly consented and before long Jahangir was again at the head of his army and the bold general was forced to seek refuge with Shah Jahan in the Deccan. After this episode Jahangir enjoyed one more summer in his lovely garden palace in Kashmir but died in 1627 when returning to Lahore.

Nur Jahan, an accomplished and clever woman, won popularity by her charitable disposition and must have had great qualities to have held her own and kept the administration going in the difficult circumstances fate forced upon her. In spite of her extravagant, unprincipled and self-indulgent husband she made Akbar's administrative system work smoothly that is without great popular risings or serious calamities other than an outbreak of plague which lasted for eight years<sup>1</sup>. A strong government in Persia helped to keep up a profitable caravan trade between India and Western Asia. There was also a lively export trade to Europe by sea, mostly paid for in gold and silver bullion for India was industrially self-supporting except for novelties which appealed to the taste of the ruling classes only. Both Jahangir's and Shah Jahan's treasury therefore found plenty of money to

<sup>1</sup> It began in 1616 in the Punjab and spread over most of Northern and Western India.



spend on the increasingly luxurious habits of the Court and its crowd of dependents. But without the stimulus of Akbar's political genius the prospect of a great spiritual and intellectual renaissance in Islam gradually faded away.

There was an element of state socialism in the Mogul administrative system which was a direct encouragement to the extravagant living of the mansabdars. An official could never by his thrift make any provision for his children because all his property lapsed to the crown after his death and his family was entirely dependent on the Padshah's grace.

policy and proceeded to capture a number of Portuguese settlements in India Ceylon Java and Malacca with a view to shifting the whole monopoly of the spice trade from Lisbon to Amsterdam

A few months after Jahangir's death Shah Jahan (1628-58) with Āsaf Khan's help had settled the question of the succession by killing off all his surviving male relatives except Dawar Bahāsh who escaped to Persia His reign is commonly said to mark the zenith of the Mogul empire But the romantic glitter and effeminate beauty of Shah Jahan's famous buildings the Taj Mahal—an exquisite elegy on his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal—the Moti Masjid at Agra and the Diwan-i-Khas at Delhi when compared with the robust virility of Akbar's monuments bear clear witness to the slackening down of the Mogul power which was imperceptibly but continuously taking place after Akbar's death even though the armies of Jahangir and Shah Jahan continued to push the boundaries of the empire farther south Shah Jahan was strong enough to put down a rising of the Rajput clans in Bundelkhand (1628) and after many difficulties and intrigues to crush the little Musalman kingdom of Ahmadnagar (1632) which since the capture of the citadel by Akbar in 1600 had revived under the leadership of an able Abyssinian slave Malik Ambar His armies could ravage the Deccan ruthlessly and force the Sultans of Golconda and Bijapur to pay tribute With 150 000 men his generals captured the Portuguese fortified post at Hughli (1631) defended by a garrison of barely a thousand But when the Great Mogul vaingloriously embarked on a campaign for recovering the Central Asian territories of his ancestor Timur the weakness of his armour showed itself He got back Kandahar by bribing the Persian governor Ali Mardan Khan But an expedition into Badakshan and Balkh commanded by his son Prince Murad ended disastrously (1647) Kandahar was retaken by the Persians two years later and in 1652-53 the flower of the Mogul army commanded by the imperial princes—first by Aurangzeb and afterwards

by Dārā Shikoh—was discomfited. Its artillery, as had been the case in several other sieges elsewhere, failed to breach the walls. Shah Jahān was constrained to make up for the loss of six months revenue by squeezing the sultans of the Deccan.

Akbar, who realised the weak point in his military equipment, had given close personal attention to the improvement of his ordnance. Shah Jahān was not a drunkard like his father, but he had neither the creative energy nor the moral fibre of his grandfather. He was more interested in his gaudy jewel, the Peacock Throne,<sup>1</sup> than in his ordnance factories. Skilled artificers, when not engaged in the extravagant hobbies of the Court, were poorly paid and had no social standing. The Mogul sūbadārs and their military subordinates were too proud to put their hands to any mechanical arts except when the Pādshāh himself set the example. The Hindu blacksmiths were forbidden to make firearms, so that bows and arrows continued to be used in India long after they were discarded in Europe. The Moguls enlisted as many European artillery men as possible into their service and left the armed cruisers of the Western powers to range the Indian seas at their will. This mental slickness implied something more than inferiority in weapons of war. Agra and Delhi did not attract the best minds of Europe, but in medical science and in some branches of mechanics the Western strangers at the Mogul Court were also proving their superiority. The age of scientific experiment and invention was beginning in Europe while India was mentally stagnating.

Shah Jahān's chief merit as a ruler lay in his careful attention to revenue administration and in consideration for the ryot from whom he drew the bulk of his income. So far as his arm stretched he tried to protect the ryot from irregular exactions, and the ryot, ever grateful for small mercies, revered his memory as a just and righteous king. From 1644 to 1656 he was assisted by an unusually honest and able Finance

<sup>1</sup> Said to have cost six crores of rupees.

Mumtaz, Sādullah Khan Allāmi a convert from Hinduism<sup>1</sup> The cruelly harassed provinces of the Deccan, after annexation, were administered by Aurangzeb who brought the revenue system into line with that of the rest of the empire By this system Shah Jahan accumulated a hoard estimated at 3000 millions of rupees But the French physician, Bernier a careful historical student who lived in India at the close of Shah Jahān's reign though much impressed by the prosperity and richness of Bengal declared that in the other provinces the tyranny of the local governors was such that the ground was seldom tilled except under compulsion, and that the people were driven to despair by every kind of cruel treatment Shah Jahan's outburst of passion, soon after the death of Mumtāz Mahal (1631), when he vented his wrath upon the Christian prisoners from Hughli and ordered the destruction of Hindu temples, must be taken to express the violence of his grief at the loss of his devoted wife, who was a pious Muslim and very bitter against the Portuguese for their cruel treatment of Muhammadans He was not ordinarily a fanatic, but he was by no means a great ruler A terrible famine in the Deccan and in Gujarāt (1630-32), followed by a pestilence which nearly wiped out the little English factory at Surat cannot be put to his account But he encouraged throughout his reign the vile practice of enslaving prisoners of war—men, women and children—which Akbar had forbidden He was powerless to check the misgovernment of distant provinces, and even in the building of the Taj under his own eye at Agra thousands of workmen are said to have died owing to the dishonesty and cruelty of the official paymasters

Neither can the elegance, costliness and super refinement of Shah Jahan's buildings be taken to indicate progress in art The Taj Mahal, the sacred shrine in which he guarded the passionate love attachment of his early years, stands in a category by itself Most of his other buildings show unmis-

<sup>1</sup> It had become a tradition with Muslim rulers to leave the collection of revenue very largely in the hands of hereditary Hindu officials.

trikable signs of an age of decadence of graceful dilettante accomplishments and intellectual flabbiness. We may pity the old man walled up in his own palace by a treacherous son, but a monarch of his mental and moral fibre was not fit to rule an empire.

So thought Aurangzēb, the only one of Mumtaz Mahal's four sons who grew up as strict a Sunni as herself when Shah Jahan seemed on the point of death in 1657. Darā Shikoh, the eldest, was in Agra and was the Padshāh's nominee but disqualified in the eyes of many Musalmans by following Akbar's religious views. The fact that they were born of the same mother did not dispose any one of the brothers to waive his traditional right to fight for the throne. Each of them as a provincial viceroy had a standing army under his orders. Shujā in Bengal and Murād Bakhsh in Gujarat were the first to assume the imperial title. Aurangzēb from his post in the Deccan, with one eye on Mir Jumla's<sup>1</sup> European artillery and the other on Darā Shikoh (through his sister Roshanara, his faithful spy at Agra), cajoled Murad into an agreement for dividing the Empire. Dara Shikoh's son Sulaimān Shikoh and Rāja Jai Singh of Jajpur defeated Shujā in February 1658. Shortly afterwards Aurangzeb and Mir Jumla joined forces with Murād and marched towards Agra. Darā Shikoh and his Rājput allies were defeated in the decisive battle at Samugarh. Aurangzēb proceeded to seize the fort and treasury at Agra and to shut up Shah Jahān in his palace, from which he never emerged until his death eight years afterwards. The foolish Murad, at last undeceived, was arrested at a drunken revel planned by Aurangzēb himself, and sent as a prisoner to Gwahar, where he was afterwards murdered. Darā Shikoh deserted by most of his supporters was vigorously pursued, and at last betrayed by an Afghan chief whose life he had once saved. *After being treated with the vilest indignities he was*

<sup>1</sup> Mir Jumla was a Persian merchant adventurer who first in the service of the Sultan of Golconda and afterwards as an ally of Aurangzeb, had become one of the first nobles of the Deccan.

tried by the Ulamā as a heretic and ally of infidels and belated.

Shujā gained ground for a time and won over Aurangzēb's eldest son to his cause but with the imperial treasury in his possession and Mir Jumla by his side Aurangzēb soon proved himself master. Shujā with all his family were driven into the mountains of Arakan and were never heard of again. So ended the war of succession.

## CHAPTER VII

AURANGZĒB AND SHIJĀ—THE SIKH KHĀLSA—RISE OF ENGLAND'S SEA POWER—THE UNITED EAST INDIA COMPANY

AURANGZĒB, born in the purple, and the wealthiest monarch of his time, yet austere and strict in all the forms of his religion, set himself the task of making all India conform to the law of Islam, as interpreted by himself and his Sunni Ulamā. For nearly fifty years he toiled unceasingly in what he took to be a Muslim ruler's duty, to undo all the reconciliatory work of Akbar and others, and to rid India of heresy, using the military instrument Akbar had placed in his hands, at the same time plotting to break all the leaders of Hinduism who kept faith with their overlord but were an obstacle in his path. He pursued his aim with a cold inflexible conformity to Muslim legal procedure and with a total disregard of personal inconveniences. He was not without a strict sense of justice when his religious prejudices were not touched as he proved by abolishing a great number of vexatious tolls and illegal cesses. But he lacked all the higher qualities which had inspired the great leaders of Islam. He could exasperate the Hindus by persecution, insults and petty annoyances and alienate his officers by a morbidly suspicious temper, but he was incapable of any great plan either for crushing the infidel or for removing

the intellectual inertia which was settling upon Mogul India. On the contrary, he did all he could to narrow its mental activities. He forbade not only the teaching of the Vedas by Brahmans but the writing of political history, the most solid intellectual recreation of his Muslim courtiers. He expelled musicians and painters from his court and put a stop to extravagant memorials of the dead, but his own aesthetic imagination comprehended no alternatives beyond the distribution of alms to the Muhammadan poor and the building of a few mosques and schools to replace the thousands of Hindu temples and schools he destroyed. In every respect Sivājī the Marāthā, his much maligned antagonist, was a greater historical figure than the Great Mogul, Aurangzeb.

Since the destruction of the Yādava kingdom by the Delhi Sultan's armies in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the people of Mahārāshtra had enjoyed no independent political life. Marāthā Brahmans had been largely employed by the Sultans of the Deccan as revenue experts and intelligence officers. The Marāthā yeomanry served as free lances in the armies of different Musalman states and had fought on the Muslim side at the battle of Talikota. Many of their chieftains were jagīrdars under the Musalman rulers, and the latter frequently took their wives from the Marāthā nobility. Though devotedly attached to their own religion, the Marāthās, like other Hindus, often worshipped at the shrines of Muslim saints. Sivājī's father, Shahājī Bhonsle, was a jagīrdar who had joined in Malik Ambar's gallant defence of Ahmadnagar against Shah Jahān's armies. Later he served the Bijāpur Sultan in fighting the Moguls. After his second marriage, his first wife, Jijabai, lived with her second son Sivājī on the family jagir at Poona. One of Shahājī's veterans, Dadoji Kondadev, a learned Brahman whose courage and wisdom had saved the young mother and her child from the many perils to which they were exposed, was Sivājī's tutor in the dharma of Hindu nobility. At the age of eighteen, proud of his supposed descent from the Yādavas of Devagiri and from the Rānās of Udaipur,

and a bhakta devoted to his mother's patron goddess, Bhavānī, Sivājī revolted at the sufferings of his native land. Instead of seeking lucrative employment in the service of Bijāpur or with the Moguls, he set himself the seemingly hopeless task of expelling the Musalman conqueror from the Deccan. The wild hillmen from the Sahyādris, who served as guards on the family estate, were his first allies. In 1646 he began to challenge the power of Bijāpur by seizing a number of hill forts surrounding his estate and by raiding government treasure. Bijāpur replied by arresting his father, Shahajī, and threatening him with death if his son refused to surrender himself. Sivājī in this dilemma negotiated with Shah Jahān and obtained his father's release (1649). A few years afterwards he annexed the jāgīr of a prominent Marāthā noble, Chandra Rao More, who was privy to a Bijāpur plot for entrapping him and had been killed in a quarrel with Sivājī's partisans. Sivājī had now collected a numerous following of all classes of his countrymen inspired by his reckless daring, winning personality and by his enthusiasm for the cause. A contemporary Vaishnava poet, Tukārām,<sup>1</sup> and his chela, Rāmdās, had kindled anew the fire of religious exaltation and roused the country-side to rally under the banner of dharma.

In 1659, a few months after Aurangzēb's formal enthronement, Sivājī came successfully out of a very critical situation. The Bijāpur government had sent Afzul Khān, a near relative of the Sultan, with an army of 12,000 cavalry and artillery to bring back the rebel dead or alive. The Khān, knowing the difficulty of the country commanded by Sivājī's mountain strongholds, sent a Brahman envoy to invite him to a conference. Sivājī, who knew from his own spies and from the Brahman himself that only treachery was intended, assented, and having made his military preparations went to the meeting-place with concealed weapons, prepared to meet craft by craft.

<sup>1</sup> At the present time, says Sir G. Grierson, 15 million Deccan peasants of all castes and creeds sing Tukārām's verses in the fields by day and in companies round some flickering lamp at night.



Afzul Khan a man of prodigious size and strength, believing his adversary to be unarmed, threw his left arm round Sivājī's neck and tried to run him through with his sword. The short but agile Marāthā, with the help of the "tiger claws," or steel points fastened to his left hand, forced the Khān to relax his grip and stabbed him with his *tinchu*, or scorpion dagger. The encounter ended with the death of the Bijāpur general and the complete rout of his army by the Marāthās, who lay in ambush.<sup>1</sup>

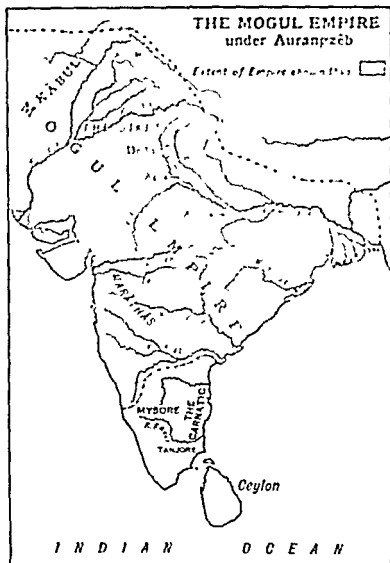
The Bijāpur government in 1662, after further disasters, were constrained to send Shahājī to negotiate peace by acknowledging Sivājī as ruler of the territories he had won and as an ally against the Moguls. Sivājī then began to raid the adjoining Mogul provinces. Aurangzēb in 1663 ordered his uncle, Shayistā Khān, to attack the Marāthā chieftain in his mountain lair, but after narrowly escaping from Sivājī and his followers, who, disguised as a wedding party, broke into the Khān's quarters at Poona by night, he retired to Aurangabad in disgust. The next year Sivājī carried off a rich booty from Surat, though an attack on the English factory failed.

On his father's death in 1664 he assumed the title of Rājā, struck coins in his own name and, with a fleet he had organised, prepared to make his sea frontier secure. An unfortunate attack on some pilgrim ships induced the Bijāpur Sultan and the Moguls to join forces against him. Sivājī, to meet this imminent danger, made terms with Rājā Jai Singh of Jaipur, the Rājput general, as a vassal of Aurangzēb and then lent his aid to the Moguls when they turned again on Bijāpur. Aurangzēb, who ardently wished to crush the Shi'ah heresy of the Deccan Sultanates, summoned Sivājī to Agra, ostensibly to reward him for his services. At the public durbar, however, Aurangzēb treated Sivājī with studied contempt, and when he showed his resentment confined him to his quarters under a

<sup>1</sup> The text follows the version of the story given by Kincaid and Parasnis (*History of the Maratha People*, pp. 157-64), which is much more convincing than Grant Duff's account derived from Muhammadan sources.

In Maharāshtra proper the mounted yeomanry who formed the bulk of Sivaji's army were kept under control and were not employed in revenue collection. But outside, in the *Mogla* territory, they were given a free hand in collecting the *chauth* and *sardismulhi*, the tax and super tax demanded as tribute. Though the commanders were expected to hand over to the treasury all valuables of gold, silver, jewelry, etc., it was naturally only a system of organised plunder. As long as Sivaji lived, however, strict discipline was maintained in the Marāthā army, and even the Musalman historian, Khāfi Khan, goes so far as to admit that "this treacherous, worthless man" showed respect for Islam and protected women and children from outrage.

While the Marāthā war of liberation was being waged in the Deccan, Aurangzeb was occupied with his religious propaganda in the north. An unsuccessful campaign in Assam (1661-63) had cost Mir Jumla his life. Thereafter there was little to disturb the peace of Hindustan except some incursions of the Afghan tribes and Aurangzeb's own fanatic policy. In 1669 he gave orders to his provincial governors to destroy all the schools and temples of the infidels. The Jāts of the Mathurā district, infuriated by the destruction of the splendid temple of Kēsava Deva, rose in revolt and gave the imperial forces much trouble for years afterwards. When the Jodhpur Rājā, Jaswant Singh, died in 1678, the Rājputs of Mārwar, incensed at an attempt to seize his infant sons and by a series of provocative edicts against Hinduism, including the revival of the *jizya*, the poll tax, flew to arms and once more made common cause with the Rānā of Mewār, Rāj Singh, in defence of their religion. One of Aurangzeb's sons, Prince Akbar, joined the Rājputs, and the Great Mogul was in a parlous situation until by the common trick of a forged letter he sowed suspicion in the Rājput ranks. After Rājputāna had been harried by two years of warfare and Prince Akbar had taken refuge with the Marathas, a peace was patched up in 1681. Then Aurangzeb moved into the Deccan with a great army to



put new spirit into the campaign against Hinduism and the Shiah heresy. Bijāpur, weakened by the former Maratha incursions, fell in 1686 and the Ādil Shāhi dynasty came to an end. Bribery secured the final fall of Golconda in the following year. Two years later Sambhājī, Shivaji's dissolute son and successor, was taken and barbarously executed. The greater part of Mahrāshtra was overrun, and Aurangzeb fondly believed that the Marathā thieves would worry him no more. But the discipline and enthusiasm which Shivaji had infused into the Maratha ranks held good. Rajaram, Sambhājī's brother, retired behind the southern line of forts, and with a friendly country at his back kept the Moguls at bay. When he died his widow, Tārā Bai, took command. Aurangzeb, entrenched in a vast unwieldy camp in which all the pomp of Delhi was ceremoniously maintained, had neither the strength of character to impose his own formal piety and asceticism upon his army nor the capacity to organise a vigorous plan of campaign. His generals paid suspicion with treason and secretly intrigued with the enemy. Famine, pestilence and flood fought on the Marāthā side. The war dragged on for years. Tārā Bai's hardy yeomanry, born experts in such a game, cut off supplies, raided and worried the Moguls incessantly and gradually closed in upon their camp. At last Aurangzēb, a querulous, disillusioned old man, retired to Ahmadnagar to die (1707), with the Marāthās following on the heels of his dispirited army, hopelessly encumbered by the gorgeous trappings of the imperial court, by their women folk and a motley horde of camp followers.

The great iconoclast's work, like Akbar's, was not finished with his death. He had undermined the foundations of the Mogul empire and created new instruments for breaking it down. The Jats of Bharatpur and the Sikhs of Amritsar armed and organised themselves against their Muslim persecutors. When Aurangzēb was in the Deccan the former raided again the country round Agra, plundered Akbar's tomb at Sikandarā and threw his bones into the fire (1691). The Sikhs

were originally one of the many groups of Hindu reformers who followed the lead of Ramanand Kabir Chaitanya and others in creating a popular religious platform on which Hindus and Musalmans could meet. Their Gurus inculcated all the moral virtues of dharma but denounced idolatry caste restrictions and *sati*. Nanak (1469-1539) was the first Guru Akbar granted to one of his successors the site of the Golden Temple at Amritsar which became the holy city of the faith. Arjun the fifth Guru who compiled the *Adi Granth* the Sikh Bible based on the traditions of Nanak, Ramanand and Kabir was tortured and put to death by Jahangir for political reasons (1606). The fraternity was at last given its martial symbolism and organisation by the tenth Guru Govind Singh (1676-1708) after his father Tegh Bahadur had suffered death rather than accept the forms of Islam at the command of Aurangzeb. Then every member of the Khalsa the Sikh Order of liberation was initiated by the drinking of water stirred by a dagger, and holy war was preached against the Mogul tyranny and the Sikhs became a fighting brotherhood defending its Book by the sword.

While Aurangzeb was thus wasting the strength of his empire in stirring up religious strife the maritime nations of Western Europe had continued to build up their fleets and enlarge their commercial cities upon the rich profits of the Eastern trade. Especially in England the great enterprises overseas being almost free from State control were an influence invigorating national life helping indirectly to throw off the fetters of feudalism and to stimulate the spirit of scientific inquiry. The course of political events since Jahangir's reign had considerably strengthened England's position in India. For a while it seemed as if the naval strength of the Dutch would make them supreme in Eastern seas. Between 1661 and 1664 they had captured all the Portuguese stations in the pepper growing districts of Malabar. They had previously taken Amboyna in Java (1605) Malacca (1641) and had founded a naval station at the Cape of Good Hope (1602).

They competed also with the English and Danes in planting trading centres in India at places where they could not hope to force an entry, such as Masulipatam and other places on the Coromandel coast, several stations in Bengal and at Surat and Ahmadabad. But Holland's claim to the entire monopoly of the spice trade and the relentless unofficial war which her sea captains waged upon all competitors inevitably led to a conflict with England's naval forces. The torture and execution of English prisoners at Amboyna in 1623 was not avenged until thirty years afterwards by Admiral Blake, but thereafter the Dutch power was weakened by continual wars with England and with France. Holland was forced to a *modus vivendi*, which left the Dutch the lion's share in the Eastern Archipelago while the English merchants concentrated on the Indian and Persian<sup>1</sup> markets.

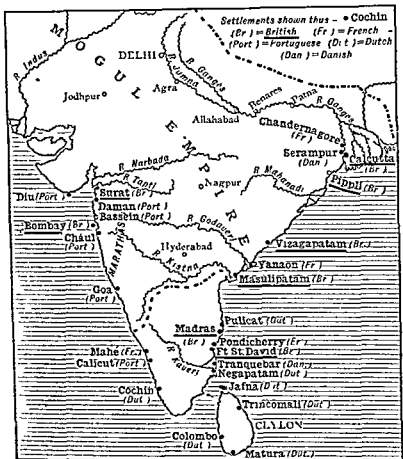
The English meanwhile pursued their original policy of friendly intercourse with the Mogul and other Indian powers. About 1616 they negotiated the building of a factory at Masulipatam. Owing to troubles with the Dutch, Francis Day, the agent, obtained in 1639 the lease of a strip of land farther south, at Chennapatam, or Madras, and proceeded to build a fort there (Fort St. George). Shah Jahān, twenty years after he had driven out the Portuguese, allowed the English to build factories at Hughli and Kāsimbazar (1651). From 1635 to 1657 the Company was in difficulties owing to civil war in England and to the grant of a charter to a rival company by Charles I. But after the defeat of the Dutch and the amalgamation of the two companies, under Cromwell's strong rule, there was a great boom in the East Indian trade. In 1661 the English position on the west coast was immensely strengthened by the acquisition of Bombay from the Portuguese, on the marriage of Catharine of Braganza with Charles II. The king, not realising its value, made it over to the East India Company for an annual rent of £10

<sup>1</sup> The capture of Ormuz from the Portuguese in 1622 with Persian help had given the English command of the Persian Gulf.

(1668). The English factors now had a harbour of their own where neither the Mafāthās nor the Dutch could molest them. Later in Aurangzēb's reign trade began to suffer badly from the protracted wars in the Deccan, and from the exactions of local governors who ignored the imperial farmāns granted to the Company. Matters came to a head about 1685 when Shāyistā Khān, whom Aurangzēb had transferred to Bengal after his discomfiture by Sivājī, imposed local dues upon the Company's traffic, contrary to the farmān granted by Shah Jahān. The Company thereupon openly defied the Great Mogul : James II. was persuaded to send out ten warships with a few companies of infantry in order to seize Chittagong (1685). The expedition failed to do anything except bring Aurangzēb's wrath upon all the English merchants, who were compelled to abandon their factories at Surat, Masulipatam and on the Hūghli. But Aurangzēb was not keen to prolong the quarrel. The English were still able to hold up the pilgrim traffic to Mecca and to confiscate every Mogul ship which put to sea. In 1690 a new farmān was granted to them and their factories were handed back. In the same year Job Charnock was allowed to plant, several miles below Hūghli, a small station which took its name from an adjoining village, Kalikatta, and afterwards grew to be the capital of British India. Fort William was built a few years afterwards, and the station was enlarged by the purchase of three villages.

The failure of an inadequate and badly planned expedition does not justify the conclusion that the English Company's directors were quite reckless and ill-informed in challenging the power of Aurangzēb. The historical significance of the incident is seen best in the light of contemporary European writings. Bernier, the Frenchman, and Manucci, the Italian, though mightily impressed by Aurangzēb's personality and by the splendour of his court, both testify to the military decadence and mal-administration of the Mogul empire. Many Europeans had served in the Mogul wars and had ample opportunity of gauging the quality of the imperial forces compared with the

best armies of Europe The English factors had many good sources of information, and had suffered themselves from the prevailing disorder and insecurity of life and property.



THE CHIEF FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA  
about the end of the 17th Century

A B—Mahe was not acquired by the French until 1725.

Aurangzēb's main army was at the time heavily involved in the Deccan. England at the close of the seventeenth century was far stronger than Portugal at the beginning of the sixteenth. But on the eve of the Revolution of 1688 the Company could



not rely upon the Home Government to exert its full power in their favour. From that time forward however, it began to be evident to the English merchants that their policy of relying upon Indian rulers for protection was no longer practical and the vision of a great dominion in the East built up by armed intervention in Indian affairs began to loom before their eyes. England they said must become a nation in India.<sup>1</sup> But renewed domestic difficulties intervened. Jealousy of the lucrative monopoly of a close corporation of London merchants made itself felt. In 1698 an Act of Parliament gave a Charter to a new company and bitter rivalry nearly brought both companies to ruin. Protracted negotiations from 1702 to 1708 led to the two companies being joined as a national undertaking under the name of "The United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies". This was the famous company which administered England's affairs in India until by the India Act of 1784 it was placed under the supervision of a Government Board of Control and the King's ministers assumed full responsibility for its direction. For some years after its formation the United Company returned to the old policy of peaceful trade, but the activity of the French in India and the political chaos which accompanied the disintegration of the Mogul empire eventually forced its hands.

## CHRONOLOGY

1518-1707

Death of Albuquerque

- 1518
- 1596-30 Babur Padshah of Hindustan
- 1527 Babur defeats Rana Sanga of Chitor
- 1530 Humayun acc
- 1540 Humayun defeated by Sher Shah at Kanauj

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the E I Company 1689

- 1542 Sher Shah Afghan Sultan  
of Delhi Akbar born
- 1545-53 Salim or Islam Shah
- 1555 Restoration of Humayun.
- 1556 Death of Humayun. Ac-  
cession of Akbar De-  
feat of Hemu at Pani-  
pat
- 1560 Bairam Khan dismissed
- 1560-2 Conquest of Jaunpur  
Malwa and Khandesh  
Abolition of *jizya* and  
other taxes
- 1565 Battle of Talikota fall of Vija-  
yanagar and decline of Por-  
tuguese trade at Goa.
- 1568 Akbar captures Chitor
- 1572-3 Conquest of Gujarat
- 1576-90 Revolts in Bengal sup-  
pressed
- 1580 Spain and Portugal united
- 1581 Holland independent
- 1582 The Din Ilahi pro-  
claimed
- 1586 Kashmir annexed.
- 1588 Defeat of the Spanish Armada.
- 1591 Sind annexed
- 1592 Orissa annexed
- 1594 Beluchistan annexed
- 1595 Chand Bibi's defence of  
Ahmadnagar
- 1595-8 Great famine
- 1600 Charter of the E I Company of  
London
- 1601 Akbar takes Asirgarh  
rebellion of Prince Salim
- 1602 Dutch E I Company formed.
- 1603 James I acc
- 1605 Death of Akbar Jahangir  
acc
- 1608-11 Capt. Hawkins in India.
- 1615-18 Sir T. Roe's embassy
- 1616-24 Plague
- 1622 Ormuz taken from the Portuguese
- 1623 Massacre of Amboyna.

|         |                                               |                                                                           |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1624    | Rebellion of Shah Jahan                       |                                                                           |
| 1625    |                                               | Charles I acc                                                             |
| 1627    | Shah Jahan acc Birth of Sivaji.               |                                                                           |
| 1631    | Hughli taken from the Portuguese              |                                                                           |
| 1640    |                                               | Madras bought by the English.                                             |
| 1649    |                                               | Charles I executed                                                        |
| 1649-58 |                                               | Cromwell Protector                                                        |
| 1657-58 | Aurangzeb's rebellion                         |                                                                           |
| 1657-62 | Sivaji's fight with Bijapur                   |                                                                           |
| 1658    | Aurangzeb acc                                 |                                                                           |
| 1659-67 | Bernier's travels                             |                                                                           |
| 1660    |                                               | The Restoration                                                           |
| 1661    |                                               | Charter of Charles II                                                     |
| 1664    | Sivaji loots Surat                            | Colbert's Compagnie des Indes founded                                     |
| 1665    | Sivaji surrenders.                            | Holland and England at war                                                |
| 1666    | Sivaji escapes from Agra Death of Shah Jahan. | France and Holland at war with England                                    |
| 1668    |                                               | E I Company acquires Bombay England Holland and Sweden at war with France |
| 1672    |                                               | England and France attack Holland                                         |
| 1674    | Sivaji's coronation                           | Pondichery founded.                                                       |
| 1676    | Govind Singh Sikh Guru born.                  |                                                                           |
| 1679    | Ji ya reimposed                               |                                                                           |
| 1680    | Death of Sivaji                               |                                                                           |
| 1681    | Aurangzeb takes command in the Deccan.        |                                                                           |
| 1685-6  |                                               | E I Co at war with Aurangzeb                                              |
| 1686    | Bijapur annexed                               |                                                                           |
| 1687    | Golconda annexed.                             |                                                                           |
| 1688    |                                               | William and Mary acc                                                      |
| 1700    | Tara Bai regent at Satara.                    |                                                                           |
| 1706    | Aurangzeb retreats to Ahmadnagar              |                                                                           |
| 1707    | Death of Aurangzeb                            |                                                                           |

## CHAPTER VIII

FALL OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE—THE MARĀTHĀ CONFEDERACY—  
THE BEGINNING OF BRITISH RULE—THE KINGDOM OF  
AFGHANISTAN

IN the eighteenth century Indian history enters upon a new phase. The Mogul empire falls utterly to pieces and the political status of modern India begins to shape itself. The Marāthās, from causes which will be presently explained, failed to take full advantage of their enemy's collapse. The English became masters in Bengal, and from that time, with the royal navy to support them and sufficient revenues to maintain standing armies on both the eastern and western coasts, British dominion in India steadily increased.

Job Charnock, perhaps had no prescience of the future in clinging obstinately to the site where he pitched his tent under the pipal tree near the cotton market of Sūtānati. But when a fort commanding the waterway was built the English held the gate key to the richest province of India, and could cut the communications of all their commercial rivals higher up the river. The Āryans of the road and river ways, and all the nomads of Central Asia who followed them, forced their way into India over the mountains and down the rivers to the sea. The Āryans of the sea ways in the eighteenth century found an easier entrance up the rivers to the mountains. About fifty years after Job Charnock had secured the English navy a landing place on the Hūghli and a future drilling ground for the Company's sepoy's one land fight—rather a skirmish than a battle—decided the fate of Bengal.

Aurangzēb's eldest surviving son, Shah Ālam, or Bahādur Shah, then sixty four years old, secured his succession to the throne by the usual fight with his brothers. He placated the Rajputs by withdrawing the *jizya* and acknow'

the independence of Mewār and Marwār. His general in the Deccan, Zulfikār Khān, held off the Marāthās by an adroit move. With Bahādur Shah's consent, he sent off Sivāji's grandson Shāhu, who had been brought up at the Mogul court, to his own relatives in Mahārashtra and thus created a dispute about the succession in the Marāthā camp. While this went on Bahādur Shah was occupied in the Panjab in putting down disturbances caused by Banda, a Sikh sectary who though not recognising Govind Singh as his teacher had accepted the Guru's sword and incited his followers among the Jāt peasantry and other low caste Hindus to avenge the Guru's children, buried alive by the Musalman governor of Sirhind. The imperial forces drove the Sikhs to the hills, but before the campaign ended Bahādur Shah died (1712).

A profligate and brutal grandson of Bahādur, Farrukh Siyar (1713-19), emerged as victor from the next conflict for the throne by the help of two powerful nobles, Abdullah and Husam Ali, known as the Sayyid brothers, who played the part of king makers for the next seven years. In Farrukh Siyar's reign Banda renewed his furious assaults upon the Musalman townfolk. But he also provoked enmity among orthodox Sikhs by chastising even Hindus who disagreed with him. Eventually the Khālsa assisted the imperial army in hunting him down. After severe fighting, Banda and about a thousand of his followers were taken prisoners and put to death with savage tortures. The Sayyid brothers procured the murder of Farrukh Siyar in 1719 because he showed signs of resisting their control.

Two more puppet Pādshāhs filled the throne for a few months each. Muhammad Shah followed, by favour of the Sayyids, in the same year, but he succeeded in getting rid of both of them, Husam Ali by assassination and his brother by imprisonment. After this show of energy he reigned feebly for nearly thirty years, a passive witness to the complete dismemberment of the Mogul empire.

The ancestor of the present Nizam of Hyderabad, a Turkish

general, Chun Kilich Khān, or Āsaf Jāh, who served for a time as Muhammad Shah's vizier, under the title of Nizam ul Mulk, "Pillar of the Empire," was one of the first of the provincial governors to assert independence. From about 1723, though he continued to render military service when it suited his own purposes, he ceased to pay tribute to Delhi, the Marāthā capital having become the fulcrum of Deccan politics. By holding Asīrgarh and other strong fortresses in the Deccan, he was able to turn off the Marāthā attacks in a northerly direction while he consolidated the Muslim forces south of the Vindhya. Oudh again became independent under its Nawāb, Saādāt Khān. Bengal, which included Bihār and Orissa, happened to have an exceptionally honest and upright sūbadār, Shuj'āud-dīn who loyally paid the tribute due to his overlord. But on his death in 1739 a local Turkish official, Alī Vardī Khān, profited by the Persian invasion and the impotence of the Delhi Court to fight his way to the governorship of the province, and it was with him as *de facto* sovereign that the English factors at Calcutta had to deal for about fifteen years.

A tribe of Afghans, the Rohillas, took possession of the districts north of the Ganges afterwards known as Rohilkhand. The Sikhs of the Punjab began to win adherents in some of the Rājput Rājās of the hill districts south of the Sutlej. Forming themselves into *misls*—fraternities or clans, which became hereditary and subsequently assumed the character of castes—they set the Mogul governors at defiance and ravaged the northern Punjab. The present ruling house of Kapurthala and the chiefs of the Phulkara states are descended from leaders of these *misls*.

Meanwhile the Marathās, having settled their disputes by giving territorial titles to the rival claimants to the throne—Shahu and Tara Bāi's son, Sivājī II<sup>1</sup>—and by allowing the

<sup>1</sup> Shahu became Rāja of Satara and Sivājī Rājā of Kolhapur but from 1714 the Peshwa Balaji Visvanath was the real ruler and when he was succeeded in 1720 by an exceedingly able son, Bajī Rāo the office became hereditary.

Council of State headed by the Peshwa to exercise sovereign power had forced Muhammad Shah to formally acknowledge the independence of Maharashtra and their right to levy *chauth* and *sardesmukhi* in the six subas of the Deccan (1720). The rule of the Brahman Peshwas which now began connoted a change in the character of the Maratha war. It was no longer a war of liberation but a war of skilfully organised plunder. The Maratha chieftains having achieved the independence of their country were seized by the lust of conquest and were out to win the broken fragments of the Mogul empire regardless of friend or foe. Hereafter the upholding of dharma was subordinate to the political intrigues, jealousies and quarrels of the Maratha leaders. Centuries of service as tax gatherers for their Muslim masters had not improved the political ethics of the Brahman order. The generals of the Peshwas plundered the Hindu states whose cause was their own as ruthlessly as the Mogul provinces.

The system of *chauth* and the Maratha method of warfare were cleverly devised to meet the economic necessities of a country which could not maintain large standing armies by its own resources. As long as Maharashtra was fighting desperately for its freedom against the pampered and brutal soldiery of Aurangzeb it had behind it a moral strength which was irresistible. But its subsequent successes under the Peshwas regime were more due to the exhaustion and demoralisation of its opponents than to the inherent strength of the Maratha arms. A well informed Frenchman, a shareholder in the new *Compagnie des Indes* writing towards the close of the eighteenth century alludes to some of the weaknesses of the Maratha military machine which eventually led to its breakdown.

They are only formidable at the opening of a campaign. If they meet with resistance, if their numerous cavalry has difficulty in collecting supplies, if they find nothing to plunder, if the war is prolonged, and especially if the four months of the military service to which they are bound have expired, they

return home in a body without any regard for the orders of their generals. It frequently happens that by winning over certain chiefs and bribing them in consequence they leave the army with the corps which they command and return with their booty to their own country. But for this indiscipline the Marāthās would long ago have conquered the whole of India.<sup>1</sup>

For a time, however, the flood of Marāthā conquest ran rapidly. Swarms of light cavalry, living frugally on the land and unencumbered by their womenfolk, held the Nizam ul Mulk in check and poured into Hindustan. Gujarat, Mālwa and Bundelkhand were overrun at the beginning of Bājī Rao's reign (1720-40), but it was not until 1743 that the Pēshwā obtained from Muhammad Shah the farmān for his authority in Mālwa without which the ryots were inclined to resist the levying of *chauth*, lest they should be forced to pay to two masters. The Pēshwā's generals, Pilāji Gaikwar, Rānoji Sindhia and Malhār Rao Holkar—ancestors of the present ruling houses of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore—solved the problem of maintaining their armies by settling down as territorial lords in the provinces they had won, but continued to serve as members of the Marāthā confederacy. Another general, Rāghojī Bhonsle, operating in Central India, from whence he raided furiously right up to the borders of Bengal adopted a truculent attitude towards the Pēshwa until he was placated by the grant of a fief as Rajā of Nāgpur.

In the midst of his difficulties Muhammad Shah was foolish enough to treat nonchalantly the envoys of a still more formidable foe, the Persian Nadir Shah, who appeared on the north west frontier in 1738 after he had driven an Afghan conqueror from the Persian throne and revived a national dynasty in his own person. Receiving no satisfaction of his demands for the surrender of some Afghan fugitives, Nadir Shah marched into the Punjab and inflicted a crushing defeat on the imperial army at Karnal (1739). Muhammad Shah

<sup>1</sup> *État Actuel de l'Inde* 1787, pp. 67-8



then submitted to the victor's mercy and escorted him into his own palace at Delhi. Disturbances arose in the city in the course of which some of Nadir Shah's men were killed. The Persian Shah unsheathed his sword as the signal for a general massacre and sat for nine hours in the Golden Mosque until at Muhammad Shah's intercession the horrible carnage was stopped. The massacre in which 30 000 people were killed, was followed by a systematic loot of the whole city. When Muhammad had signed away all his territory west of the Indus, Nadir Shah returned home with an enormous booty, which included Shah Jahan's Peacock Throne, the bulk of the Padshah's treasure and as usual a number of Indian craftsmen who were too valuable to kill.

It stands to Muhammad Shah's credit that he enjoyed the friendship of one of the most distinguished of the Rajput princes, Raja Jai Singh II (1699-1743). Partly owing to the Raja's conspicuous ability as a ruler, the Amber or Jaipur State remained during most of his lifetime out of the track of war storms. He was thus able to devote much time to astronomical research in which he was keenly interested. He built an observatory at Jaipur, the fine new city he founded in 1728 and others at Benares, Delhi, Muttra and Ujjain. He kept in touch with contemporary science, especially French, by collecting numerous mathematical works and having them translated into Sanskrit. He revised the *Tabulae Astronomicae* of Lahure<sup>1</sup> published in 1702 and prepared new tables which he dedicated to Muhammad Shah, for he kept up his family tradition of loyalty to Akbar's descendants while remaining on friendly terms with his Hindu neighbours, Mewar and Jodhpur. This Rajput city builder and scientist fills one of the few bright pages in eighteenth century history. Soon after his death in 1743 the greater part of India was involved in a prolonged melee in which Marathas, Moguls, Afghans, English and French were principals, behind them sinister hordes of armed

<sup>1</sup> An eminent French mathematician (1640-1718), Professor of the Collège de France.

banditti, pirates, thugs and so called sannyāsīs, infected with war fever

Towards the end of Muhammad Shah's reign the war of the Austrian Succession in Europe brought about the first conflict of the English and French on Indian soil (1745-49) Nādir Shah was murdered in 1747, with the consequence that his Afghan officer, Ahmad Shah Abdālī, chief of the Durrānī clan, took possession of the Shah's Afghan provinces and soon afterwards entered the Punjab. Thus new invasion was checked by the imperial army under Muhammad Shah's eldest son, the Mogul Ahmad Shah, at Sīhrīnd on the Sutlej.

The death of Muhammad Shah, and of the Nizam, Āsif Jāh, in the following year precipitated the general mêlée. Ahmad Shah, the Mogul, succeeded peacefully to the throne of Delhi with the Nizam's intriguing grandson, Ghāzī ud dīn, as Vizier, but before long his Afghan namesake, the Abdālī, seized Lahore and the Punjab. In the Deccan Āsif Jāh's sons and grandsons began to fight for the succession to the Nizamate, the Marāthās, French and English intervening. The next year Shāhu, the Rājā of Sātārā, in whose name the Pēshwās had hitherto governed, also died, but not before Bālājī Bājī Rao, who had succeeded his father, Bājī Rao, in 1740, had obtained from the feeble old man a decree conferring on himself and his heirs sovereign rights as rulers of the Marāthā confederacy, the royal title, a small pension and the jāgīr of Sātārā being reserved for the heirs of the Rājā. The seat of the Marāthā government was then removed to Poona.

Thus paper *coup d'état* roused to fury Tārā Bāī, who since 1708 had lived in obscurity with her idiot son Sivājī II, the rival Rājā at Kolhapur. She threw herself with her partisans into the fortress of Sātārā, defied the Pēshwa and proclaimed her grandson, Rāmaraja, as the lawful sovereign. When the latter declined the proffered dignity she put him into a dungeon and kept the great Sivājī's flag flying until her death in 1761. The Peshwā, when he had defeated and imprisoned Damaji

Gulwar the general who supported her wisely left the old lady alone

All the armies of the Maratha confederacy were now being strengthened by a nucleus of regular infantry and large parks of artillery generally officered by Europeans so that the demand for *chauth* to maintain them was constantly increasing. To assist in their foraging and predatory raids large numbers of Pindaris mounted landitti drawn from the dregs of the population were engaged. Their rapacity and savage cruelty still remembered in provincial folk lore made the Maratha name feared and hated for generations afterwards. Ali Vardi Khan to free himself from their annual depredations undertook in 1752 to pay Raghonath Bhonsle twelve lakhs in *chauth* and to cede to him the Orissa districts. In 1757 the Hindu ruler of Mysore bought off the Peshwa's army by giving several taluks as security for his demands.

The French and English Companies though peace had been declared in Europe continued to fight each other in the Deccan. Dupleix as Governor of the French settlement at Pondichery and Bussy in the service of the Nizam combining in a great effort to drive the English out of the Carnatic. After the failure and recall of Dupleix in 1754 the struggle was renewed until it was ended seven years later by the fall of Pondichery a blow from which the French in India never recovered.

Meanwhile at Delhi Ghazi ud din had blinded and deposed Ahmad Shah (1754) and put Alamgir II on the throne. He then ventured to challenge Shah Abdali's authority in the Punjab by seizing Lahore. This brought the Afghan king back to India. Delhi again suffered massacre and pillage and crowds of inoffensive pilgrims at Mathura were slaughtered by his cavalry (1756).

As soon as Shah Abdali had retired Ghazi ud din's son called in Maratha aid. The Peshwa's brother Ragoba or Raghunath marched to Delhi. Alamgir II was murdered. A new Padshah Shah Alam (1759-1806) was set up for the

house of Tīmūr still served as a symbol of legal authority in Hindustan. But Ragoba offended Muhammadan sentiment and disclosed the real aim of Marāthā ambition by occupying the Punjab and expelling the Afghan garrison. The Pēshwā's army under his cousin, Sadāsheo Bhāo, won a great victory over the Nizam at Udayagiri (1760), taking from him Asīrgarh and four other great fortresses. The Marāthās were now at the height of their power and the dominion of Hindustan seemed to be within their grasp.

But their confederacy was too loosely knit together, their generals were more skilled in guerilla warfare than in the strategy of pitched battles, and their allies, the Jāts of Bharatpur and a few Rājput contingents, were half-hearted. The religious zeal of the Muhammadans was roused and they had in Shah Abdālī a military leader of great capacity and wide experience. The Afghan army in 1759-60 retook Lahore, drove off Holkar's and Sindia's plundering forays, and marched to join the Rohillas and others who responded to the call of Islam in danger. All the contingents of the Marāthā confederacy collected at the Pēshwā's summons. The two armies ultimately entrenched themselves on the historic plain of Pānīpat. Shah Abdālī had under his command about 40,000 cavalry and 35,000 infantry. The Marāthā confederacy, under Sadāsheo Bhāo, mustered 55,000 cavalry, besides 15,000 Pindārīs, and 15,000 infantry. Both sides had large parks of artillery and vast unnumbered hosts of auxiliaries. In January 1761 Sadāsheo Bhāo, owing to the failure of supplies, was forced to give battle. At the first onset their numerical superiority in cavalry and artillery gave the Marāthās the advantage. But a great rally of the Afghans, when their right and centre were broken, won for them an overwhelming victory. Sadāsheo Bhāo, Visvās Rāo the Pēshwā's son and many of the Marāthā chieftains fell. The rout of the Marāthā army was followed by a merciless slaughter of prisoners and fugitives, in which the local peasantry, infuriated by the depredations they had suffered, took part.

The Pēshwā, coming up too late with reinforcements, intercepted a banker's runner and thus learnt the fatal news "Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty seven gold mohurs lost, of the silver and copper the total cannot be reckoned!" He returned to Poona broken with grief and died a few months later. Tārā Bāī, on her deathbed soon after the disaster, was comforted. Bhavānī her patron goddess, had thus avenged the wrongs of the house of Sivājī.

By the irony of fate the Afghan king was unable to profit by the great victory which seemed to put Hindustan at his feet. His army mutinied and demanded to return to Afghanistan. Shah Abdālī was forced to yield, and his departure left the field open. The Sikhs were the first to seize the opportunity. The Shah returned later to inflict a severe defeat on a confederacy of their *misl*s. Their leader, Ala Singh, was taken prisoner, but was subsequently released and installed as Rājā of the districts he had won south of the Sutlaj, so that the Sikhs might prevent further Mogul incursions. This was the beginning of the present Patāla State.

Three and a half years before the battle of Pānīpat the British had become masters in Bengal through Clive's victory at Plassey (June 1757). The French navy was crippled in the Seven Years' War, and their settlements in India were put *hors de combat*.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH— CLIVE AND THE ENGLISH IN BENGAŁ

WE must now return to the affairs of the East India Company and trace the development of the struggle between English and French in India. Richelieu was the first French statesman to realise the importance of the Indian trade, but his Compagnie d'Orient, founded in 1642, was a failure. Colbert,

who corresponded with Bernier, reconstructed it in 1664 under the name of *La Compagnie des Indes*. The French Company differed from the English in being from the first in Court and official leading strings—it was under state supervision and openly combined political with commercial aims. It came immediately into conflict with the Dutch on the Coromandel Coast, but as the Dutch power weakened at the beginning of the eighteenth century its settlement at Pondichery, founded in 1683, grew in importance. Chandernagore, on the Hûghli, did a thriving trade in Bengal. Mahe, acquired in 1725, was in the centre of the Malabar pepper districts. Kārikāl, south of Pondichery, was a gift from Chanda Sahib, one of the competitors for the rulership of the Carnatic, as a reward for French help.

The English United East India Company, taking to heart the fiasco of 1685, returned in 1708 to the old policy of peaceful trade. As long as Ali Vardī Khān was Nawāb there was no need for excessive military expenditure in Bengal, although Calcutta was threatened in 1742 by the Marāṭha incursions. The Nawab, though sometimes aggressive, kept to his engagements with the Company and its business prospered. The trouble began in the Carnatic, the hinterland of the chief French and English stations on the Coromandel Coast. François Martin, the first Governor of Pondichery, followed the policy of supporting his military establishment by entering into the quarrels of native chiefs. Dumas (1735–41) won Kārikāl by the same means. In 1740 the Nawab of the Carnatic, Dost Ali Khan, was defeated and killed by the Marāṭhas in a *chauth* gathering campaign. Dumas won immense prestige by refusing either to pay *chauth* or to surrender the Nawāb's widow and daughter, who, with the family jewels, had been placed under French protection. Thereafter Frenchmen were in great demand at the Indian Courts for drilling and commanding picked bodies of troops in the European fashion.

Dupleix, who had proved his business capacity by raising

Chandernagore to a flourishing town of nearly 100 000 inhabitants, succeeded Dumas in 1741. The disturbed state of the Carnatic at that time gave more scope for his political ambition than Bengal where the English commanded the waterway and the Nawāb was a capable ruler. The French in 1715 had secured an admirable naval base in the Indian Ocean—the Mauritius—and when war broke out between France and England in 1744 Dupleix immediately prepared for an attack on Madras by obtaining the consent of Anwār ud dūn Nawāb of the Carnatic to his plans. Madras was weakly held and fell easily to the French fleet commanded by La Bourdonnais (1746). The admiral promised to return the town to the English on payment of a large ransom, but this arrangement Dupleix refused to ratify. He proceeded to demolish the fortifications and drove back the army sent by the Nawāb to enforce the fulfilment of a promise to deliver up the town to him. The English by this time had regained command of the sea. A strong fleet under Admiral Boscawen tried ineffectually to turn the tables by investing Pondichery (1748). The attack was beaten off with heavy loss to the English. Except for the little fortress of St David near Cuddalore in which the English still held out, Dupleix's triumph was complete. To his intense chagrin the war was finished in Europe the same year, and by the treaty of Aix la Chapelle Madras was given back to the English in exchange for Louisburg in North America.

Dupleix had now a military force which had proved its mettle, but no means of maintaining it except the Indian ways—by *chauth*, tax paying land or by hiring it out. The English were better off financially, but afraid of the growing influence of the French at the Indian Courts. They gave Dupleix an excellent excuse for making private war by an ill planned and abortive interference in the affairs of the Rāj of Tanjore. Dupleix had his turn when the usual war of succession, both in the Deccan and in its feudatory state the Carnatic, followed the death of the Nizam ul Mulk in 1748. The Nizam's second

son, Nāsir Jang, was opposed by a grandson, Muzaffar Jang. The latter made a bargain with Chanda Sahib, son in law of Dōst Ali Khān, to give him the Carnatic in return for help in winning the Deccan for himself. Chanda Sahib was then a prisoner at Sātārā, but Dupleix helped to obtain his release and backed the joint enterprise by a French contingent, commanded by a very able officer, De Bussy. Anwar ud dīn, the ruling Nawāb of the Carnatic, was defeated and killed (1749). His son, Muhammad Ali, fled to Trichinopoly and appealed for English help. Nāsir Jang, supported by the Marāthās, under Rājhoji Bhonsle, marched into the Carnatic, but in the end Dupleix's intrigues and Bussy's military skill were too much for him. He was murdered by a Pathan officer in his own camp. Muzaffar Jang was proclaimed Nizam (1750). Dupleix received a high sounding title and valuable grants of land. Bussy remained with his French contingent in the Nizam's service, when Muzaffar Jang was killed soon after his accession he put in his own nominee, Salabat Jang, as Nizam. Later on he obtained the grant of the east coast districts, known as the Northern Sircars, as provision for himself and his troops.

But now the tide began to turn. While Muhammad Ali, aided by an English contingent, was being besieged in Trichinopoly by Chanda Sahib and his French allies, Robert Clive, a captain in the Madras service obtained permission to make a diversion by a dash at Chanda Sahib's capital, Arcot. With only 200 Europeans and 300 Sepoys, Clive not only took the town but held it for fifty four days, until the besieging army sent by Chanda Sahib to retake it was beaten off with heavy loss. This brilliant feat of arms was followed by the relief of Trichinopoly by Major Stringer Lawrence and Clive, and the surrender of the French contingent at Srirangam (1752).

Dupleix, who had acted as his Company's banker, was now obliged to acknowledge a deficit of two million francs. After further attempts to retrieve the military situation had been



countered by Clive and Lawrence, he opened negotiations with the Madras president, Saunders. But on the failure of his ambitious schemes Dupleix was recalled by his own Government (1754), who sent a special envoy, Godeheu, to arrange a peace by which Muhammad Ali was recognised as Nawāb of the Carnatic and Salābat Jang as Nizam. Dupleix lost the income of his private jāgīr in the subsequent wars and died in poverty ten years after his return to France.

The Seven Years' War began in 1756. Political interest now returns to Bengal, where the English, French and Dutch Companies had hitherto conducted their business peacefully under the authority of the ruling Nawāb, Alī Vardī Khan. The brief entrance upon the scene of German competitors for Indian trade was recalled by an incident in the Great War.<sup>1</sup> In 1753 a Bengal Trading Company was started at Fmden by Frederick the Great of Prussia. Neither the Nawāb nor the older trading Companies were friendly to the enterprise. It soon ended in failure, but was not forgotten by the Prussian merchant adventurers a century and a half later when their forces were being organised for the destruction of British commerce.

The Nawāb died in 1756 and was succeeded by a thoroughly vicious and foolish relative, who took the title of Sirāj ud dīulāh. He was unfriendly to the English for various reasons and wished to deprive them of the trading privileges granted to them by Farrukh Siyar in 1717. They had given shelter to a rich Hindu, Kishan Das, who had escaped from his clutches. Moreover, on account of the impending war with France they had begun to strengthen Fort William without his consent. The Nawāb marched against Calcutta with 50,000 men. The president, Drake, with part of the small garrison sailed down the river to Fulta. The rest, less than 200 Europeans under Holwell, defended the fort for three days, and then surrendered on promise of fair treatment. All the prisoners, about 146, including women, were locked in 'the Black Hole'—a

<sup>1</sup> The exploits of the cruiser *Fmden* in the Bay of Bengal.

stifling guard room less than twenty feet square—on one of the hottest nights of June Only twenty three lived till the morning

The news reached Madras just when Clive<sup>1</sup> with Admiral Watson's fleet arrived, after storming Gheria, a fortified harbour on "the Pirates' Coast," i.e. between Goa and Bombay, and releasing eight English and three Dutch merchant captains from its dungeons<sup>2</sup> The situation was difficult on account of the expected attack of the French fleet But after two months' deliberation a force considered large enough to deal with Sirāj ud daulah, 600 Europeans and 1500 Sepoys under Clive's command, was despatched with Watson's fleet Calcutta was retaken without difficulty in January 1757 Sirāj ud daulah was forced to come to terms Clive then struck the first blow in the Seven Years' War on Indian soil by capturing Chander nagore from the French

Then the game of intrigue began Sirāj ud daulah took the refugees from Chandernagore into his service and negotiated with Bussy for French help Mir Jafar, a brother in law of Ali Vardī Khan, who had been insulted by the Nawāb, saw his opportunity to win a throne and plotted with the English A secret treaty was drawn up, Clive, Watson and two members of Council signing it Amīnchand, an influential Sikh banker at Calcutta, was privy to the plot, but apparently favoured another candidate Clive secured his support by showing him a falsified copy of the treaty to which a clause promising the banker a large reward was added In view of the defenceless state of Madras and the near approach of the rainy season, Clive then decided to march at once against the Nawāb The English force numbered about 1000 Europeans and 2000 Sepoys, with nine or ten light guns Surāj ud daulah mustered some 50 000 infantry, 15,000 horse and about 50 heavy guns

<sup>1</sup> Clive had been on leave in England since 1753

<sup>2</sup> Angria the pirate chief like the Pindaris on land was to be hired for regular warfare and waged it on his own account, though his ordinary business was piracy

and transferred Bussy's rights to the English. Lally was forced to raise the siege of Madras by the arrival of the English fleet. He was badly beaten by Colonel Eyre Coote (another of Clive's stalwarts) at Wandiwash, where Bussy was taken prisoner. Shut up at last in Pondichery, he made a gallant defence for over six months but was finally starved into surrender early in 1761.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the unsettled state of Bengal was causing trouble. Mir Jafar chafed at finding himself completely in the English power and began to intrigue with the Dutch, who were chagrined at the immense advantages gained by their rivals in trade. Although England and Holland were at peace, the Dutch authorities in Java sent ships of war and soldiers to Chinsura, their station above Calcutta. Clive was again equal to the occasion. The Dutch ships were captured on their way up the Hûghli, and their land forces under French command, were defeated by Colonel Forde after a stiff fight at Biderra (1769). In the same year the Mogul prince Ali Gafar, rebelled against his father, Ālamgir II, and put in a claim to Mir Jafar's territory in the Pādshāh's name. In alliance with the Nawāb of Oudh he laid siege to Patna. The news of Clive's approach was sufficient to raise the siege, the Company's forces subsequently assisted in putting down the rebellion.

In 1760 Clive returned to England on account of ill health. The Seven Years War, in which India and North America were the stakes, came to an end in 1763. By the Treaty of Paris Pondichery, Chandernagore and other stations were restored to France, but La Compagnie des Indes was dissolved in 1769 and the maintenance of British supremacy at sea made it impossible for any of her European competitors to check the growing ascendancy of Great Britain in India.

<sup>1</sup> After his release and return to France Lally was condemned and executed for betraying the interests of his king and country. His son, after the Revolution obtained the annulment of the sentence and the restoration of his father's estates.

|          |                                                                       |                                                                                        |                                                          |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1740-61  | Bālājī Bāji Rao, Pēshwā                                               |                                                                                        |                                                          |
| 1742     |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Dupleix, Governor of Pondichery                          |
| 1745-9.  |                                                                       |                                                                                        | First Anglo French war.                                  |
| 1746     |                                                                       |                                                                                        | French capture Madras                                    |
| 1747.    |                                                                       |                                                                                        |                                                          |
|          |                                                                       | Afghanistan independent under Ahmad Shah Abdali Ahmad Shah, Padshah Nasir Jang, Nizam. |                                                          |
| 1748.    |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Peace of Aix la Chapelle                                 |
| 1749-54. |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Second Anglo French war                                  |
|          |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Madras restored to the English                           |
| 1750-3   |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Prussian Indian Co                                       |
| 1750     |                                                                       | Muzaffar Jang, Nizam Punjab annexed by Afghans                                         |                                                          |
|          |                                                                       | Salabat Jang, Nizam                                                                    | Clive seizes Arcot                                       |
| 1751     | Orissa ceded to Marāthas.                                             | Alamgir II, Padshāh                                                                    | Recall of Dupleix                                        |
| 1754     |                                                                       | Ahmad Shah Abdali sacks Delhi                                                          | Siraj ud daulah, Nawāb of Bengal, seizes Calcutta        |
| 1756     |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Recapture of Calcutta battle of Plassey Mir Jafar, Nawab |
| 1757     |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Third Anglo French war                                   |
|          |                                                                       |                                                                                        | Vansittart, Governor of Bengal Mir Kasim, Nawab          |
| 1757-61  |                                                                       |                                                                                        |                                                          |
| 1758     | Marāthās occupy Punjab                                                |                                                                                        | Surrender of Pondichery                                  |
| 1759     |                                                                       | Shah Alam II, Padshāh                                                                  |                                                          |
| 1761.    | Battle of Panipat Death of Bālājī Rāo and Tarā Bai Madhu Rāo, Pēshwā. | Nizam Ali, Nizam                                                                       |                                                          |

## CHAPTER X

THE NAWABS OF BENGAL AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY—  
CLIVE'S REFORMS—AFFAIRS IN THE CARNATIC AND MYSORE

(1763-1771)

SIRAJ UD DAULAH had brought his kingdom into a situation which was impossible both for his successors as rulers and for the English Company as a trading corporation. Mir Jafar was unable to find money for his own troops without which he could not maintain his authority in the province. The Company's finances in spite of the Nawab's contributions were unable to bear the heavy military outlay. Their servants paid only a nominal salary and left to provide for themselves by profits on the inland trade not only claimed local monopolies and toll exemptions as the Company's servants but abused their newly won authority by trafficking these privileges with the Nawab's own subjects. The position was a hopeless one for a capable ruler. Mir Jafar was weak and indolent. Soon after Clive's departure the Calcutta Council replaced him by his son-in-law Mir Kasim and in their new rôle as sovereign lords took the customary fees for themselves and the grant of three more districts<sup>1</sup> to the Company in return for military support.

The new Nawab showed unexpected energy and resource. He began to put his finances in order and to discipline his troops. He moved his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr a stronger position higher up the Ganges and sent a protest to Calcutta against the illegal acts of the Company's servants whose flagrant abuse of the salt monopoly granted to the Company by Mir Jafar deprived the Nawab of a valuable source of revenue. The Governor Vansittart and Warren Hastings were disposed to a reasonable compromise but the

<sup>1</sup> Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong.

majority of the Council would not agree to any curtailment of their perquisites. The Nawab retaliated by abolishing all transit tolls, thus putting Indian and foreign traders on the same footing.

The violent and foolhardy conduct of Ellis, the English factor at Patna, led to open war in 1763. Ellis, after holding Patna for a short time, was taken prisoner with about 200 others. But the Nawab's forces failed to stand against the Company's disciplined troops, and Mir Kāsim was forced to retreat into Oudh. Before he left Patna he wreaked his vengeance on the English prisoners by ordering a German adventurer in his service, Walter Reinhardt, nicknamed Sombre or Sumroo, to butcher them. The decisive battle was fought at Buxar next year (1764), when Mir Kāsim, in alliance with the Nawab of Oudh and with the nominal support of the Delhi emperor, Shah Ālam, made a last desperate effort. The Company's troops, with reinforcements from Europe under Major Hector Munro, won a great victory. The Nawab of Oudh submitted soon afterwards. Shah Ālam put himself under British protection. Mir Kāsim fled and died afterwards in obscurity at Delhi. British sovereignty in Bengal was now an undisputed fact.

The Company, however, found it easier to win battles than to reconstruct a rotten and demoralised administration as a link in their trading system. The Court of Directors evaded for some time longer the obvious course of paying their servants enough to keep them above the temptation to illicit gains, which venal native officials and greedy *bamas* were too ready to share with them. In 1765 they sent Clive, who had been raised to the peerage as Baron Clive of Plassey, to devise remedies for the prevailing disorder and corruption. He set about his difficult task with his usual energy and determination. After restraining the hot heads at Calcutta who were for an immediate march to Delhi, he went to Allahabad and concluded peace with Shah Ālam and the Nawab of Oudh. The *Diwani* or rights of revenue administration, of Bengal, Bihar

and part of Orissa was conferred on the Company, on payment of twenty six lakhs of rupees annually to the Pādshah. After handing over the districts of Allahabad and Karra—*minus* Benares and Ghāzipur, which had become the Company's jāgīrs—to Shah Ālam, Oudh was restored to the Nawāb who also paid a war indemnity and became the Company's ally. The territorial rights of the Company in the districts already taken over, including the Northern Circars were confirmed.

Mir Jafar had previously been reinstated as Nawāb of Bengal. He died in 1765, and thenceforth the Nawāb was merely the Company's pensioner. It was impossible for the Company to attempt to administer the province with its inadequate European staff. Clive therefore set up a "dyarchy," or dual control, under which Muhammad Razā Khān, one of the Nawāb's family, acted as the Nawāb's deputy at Murshīdabād, while a Hindu, Rājā Shitāb Rai, had the same position at Patna. They were responsible to the Company for the collection and payment of revenues, while the executive control and administration of justice and police, in cases which did not concern the Company, were left in their hands. The arrangement was only a makeshift and did not last long. Clive met with violent opposition in his attempts to deal with the perquisites of the Company's servants. The military officers came near to open mutiny when their *batta* was cut down, and strong measures were needed to bring them to a sense of duty. Covenants binding them not to receive "presents" were forced upon all the Company's servants. But beyond a reduction in the retail price of salt, Clive failed to put a stop to the evils of the inland trade. Bengal continued to suffer from the irregular exactions of irresponsible traders, but more from the expert cunning of subservient revenue agents, whose oppression grew worse as the sources of revenue diminished. It was left to Warren Hastings and his successors to renew the work of Arin statecraft in India. Clive's nervous temperament was unequal to the task. In 1767 he returned to England for the last time and died by his own hand seven years later.

The situation in Madras where the Company relied upon its nominal ally, Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic, to make the necessary provision for the force which protected their own territory and kept him on his throne, was even worse than in Bengal. The financial difficulties of the Nawab were aggravated by the Company's servants who made up for their meagre salaries by shameless usury. The whole of the Deccan and the greater part of Southern India was an armed camp. There was no prospect of a termination of the protracted struggle between the Marathas and their numerous adversaries. Religious or national sentiment no longer played a part in the struggle. It had degenerated into an endless tussle of rival dynasties for power and wealth, as ruinous for the social life of India as it was for honest trading. The narrow outlook of Maratha leadership, which was largely responsible for the disaster of Panipat, continued to dominate Indian politics. Each member of the Confederation played for his own hand, and divided counsels weakened the authority of the Peshwa. Mādhū Rāo the second son of Bālājī Rāo, succeeded his father in 1761 with his uncle Ragoba as Regent. The Muhammadan powers of the Deccan, the Nizam Ali, who dethroned and succeeded Salabat Jang in 1761, and Haider Ali of Mysore, were quick to profit by the temporary confusion at Poona. The Nizam recovered most of the districts he had lost at Udayagiri. Haider Ali threatened Marāthā supremacy in the South.

The rise of this new Muhammadan power was a direct consequence of the aggressive policy of the last Peshwa against his Hindu neighbour the Wodeyar Raja of Mysore, whose dynasty was established in the sixteenth century on the ruins of the Vijayanagar empire. Haider Ali a Musalman officer in the Rajā's service, distinguished himself in repelling the Maratha attacks, and in the year of Panipat took advantage of his rapid promotion to overthrow the dynasty. Between 1761 and 1770 the situation in the Deccan was a confused tangle. Mādhū Rao quarrelled with the domineering Regent. The



latter in revenge intrigued with the Nizam. A reconciliation took place and then an open fight, which ended in Razob's defeat and imprisonment. Haidar Ali was defeated by the Peshwā in 1764. The next year the English at Madras were embroiled in a war with Haidar Ali by lending themselves to the intrigues of the contending parties. Colonel Joseph Smith defeated the combined forces of the Nizam and Haidar Ali at Trinomali in 1767. But after much desultory fighting Haidar Ali appeared before Madras in 1769 and forced the Council to sign a treaty providing for mutual help in case of attack, and the restitution of prisoners and territorial gains on both sides. The Treaty of Madras was the cause of much subsequent trouble for the English.

In 1770 the Peshwa's army again defeated Haidar Ali and forced him back to his capital, Seringapatam. He was compelled to pay *chauth* and to yield some of his territory. The Rājputs and Jāts were the next to suffer from the Peshwā's attacks. But Mādhu Rāo died in 1772, and Mahādaji Sindia became the most powerful member of the Marāthā confederacy in Hindustan. When Shah Alam in 1771 left Allahabad and returned to Delhi, he put himself under Sindia's protection.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONDITION OF INDIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY— WARREN HASTINGS (1772-83)

IN order to understand the condition of India at the beginning of Warren Hastings' administration, it is necessary to review briefly some of the effects of Mogul rule upon India's social and economic life. First and foremost were the consequences of the prolonged domination of India by the landmen of Central Asia. Caring only for land power and satiated by the land-riches of India, they had allowed the immense sources of wealth,

means of livelihood, scientific culture, social discipline and political strength, which the traffic of the high seas connotes, to be gradually absorbed by the more enterprising European traders. The social framework of Hinduism, the caste system, had resisted all the efforts of Islam to destroy it. Only the power and influence of the Brahmans over the lower castes had greatly increased. The Muhammadan rulers had used the art and science which the caste system had provided for building their magnificent mosques, tombs and palaces. Islam had given the Indian builders great artistic opportunities and much wider scope for their engineering skill. The other industrial castes had also served India's economic needs admirably under the Mogul military system. Most of the commerce and manufactures of the country remained, however, in the hands of Hindus, a rich merchant or banker could always buy court favour, a clever craftsman might win a rich man's patronage.

But the guilds, which made the mercantile and industrial classes collectively a power in the Hindu state, were, like the village communities, deprived of all political influence. The Mogul conquerors, as far as they could, militarised the whole economic system of India. The freedom which Islam gave the outcaste by first in his right to fight<sup>1</sup>. And in the eighteenth century in India there was every inducement to fight rather than work. Fighting was the only sure way to social advancement, and the pay of the common soldier was higher than that of the most useful artisan<sup>2</sup>. For dwindling maritime commerce and military unemployment there was an easy and lucrative remedy in brigandage and piracy, openly encouraged and supported by the military chiefs, especially by the Marāthās. It was these dominant economic factors, quite as much as political strife, which accounted for the chaotic condition into

<sup>1</sup> In Hinduism also war broke down rules of precedence in caste. Most of the Hindu leaders in the wars of the eighteenth century were of low caste origin.

<sup>2</sup> *État actuel de L'Inde*, 1789, p. 79

which India was drifting in the eighteenth century' But for the strength of the caste system which held Hindu society together, the process of economic disintegration would have been much more rapid Even in Bengal, "the paradise of India" many sources of industrial wealth, especially the production of raw silk, had dried up before British rule began<sup>1</sup>

Education which in Europe was making great progress, was on the downward path in India The colleges (Madrasas) founded in the Muhammadan capitals had in former times sent out many great and learned men, though Islam in India never attained the high distinction in scientific pursuits it had won in other countries At the end of the eighteenth century, says a contemporary writer,<sup>2</sup> the Madrasas were in a ruinous condition and their endowments had lapsed Outside the great towns the mass of the Muslim population, recruited mostly by force from the lowest castes of Hindus, were left to their own superstition and ignorance On the other hand, in the Marāthā territories and parts of Hindustan the uplifting movement of Hindu culture represented by Tukārām, Tulsī Dās and other Vaishnava teachers, retained its vitality in spite of political disorders And in Hindu villages, wherever local conditions allowed, the traditional rudimentary education in reading, writing, arithmetic and mensuration was given to the children of petty shopkeepers, small landholders and well to do cultivators For higher Brahmanical learning the Sanskrit schools at Benares and other centres were maintained

But Sanskrit learning usually had degenerated into a purely pedantic and formal type, without imagination, creative inspiration or the scientific sense The printing press was

<sup>1</sup> Mr Verelst found from the revenue accounts of the Nawāb that before the invasion of Nadir Shah nearly 70 lakhs of rupees were brought into Bengal annually for the purchase of raw silk alone Most of this influx of wealth ceased before the British Government existed (*A Short Review of the British Government of India* (Guthrie Sitakulak, London, 1790) p 79)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* pp 102-3

practically unknown in India. Printed books were unclean foreign things which the Brahman could not touch. Except Muhammad Shah, no Mogul ruler after Akbar interested himself in scientific research, but most of them amused themselves with painting and music. Even at the Mogul court the strict Musalman always looked askance at painting and music as unlawful dissipations, like wine bibbing. Mogul painting, exquisite as it was, never quite shook off the effects of this religious ban. It always lacked the spiritual fire and æsthetic grandeur of the Ajantā school, which had its roots deep in religious life.

India seemed almost everywhere to be sinking into political and social chaos. In spite of official jobbery and corruption, the British settlements were harbours of refuge for the native populations. "I have seen," wrote Warren Hastings, "in a time of profound peace, the wretched inhabitants of the Carnatic, of every age, sex and condition, tumultuously thronging round the walls of Fort St. George, and lying for many successive days and nights on the burning soil, without covering or food, on a casual rumour falsely excited of an approaching enemy."<sup>1</sup> Some part of the Marāthā territory was also for a time such an oasis of peace and security, especially the Indore state, ruled by the widow of Malhār Rāo Holkar, Ahalyā Bāi, one of the illustrious Hindu women whose names have become household words in India for piety and devotion to the dharma. Ably supported by her loyal general, Tukojī Rāo, she ruled her dominions wisely and well for nearly thirty years (1765-95). Tukojī Rao succeeded her, but on his death two years later the succession was disputed. Sindia intervened, his army razed the Indore capital to the ground and the whole state relapsed into anarchy.

About five years after Clive's departure the Directors, on account of the increasing disorder in Bengal and the alarming state of their finances, transferred Warren Hastings from the

<sup>1</sup> *The Present State of the East Indies* (London, 1786)

Madras Council to the governorship of Bengal. He took charge in 1772. Two years previously a terrible famine caused by a failure of the rains had ravaged a large part of India. In Bengal it was estimated that one third of the population perished. Rumours of mal administration had reached the Directors' ears and acting on Hastings' advice they resolved to stand forth as Diwan i.e. to take over the direct control of revenue collection. Hastings was instructed to remove the two deputy Nawabs appointed by Clive, Muhammad Raza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai, and to put them on trial. They were honourably acquitted of the charges of dishonesty brought against them. But the severity with which Muhammad Raza exercised his functions was evident from the fact that in spite of the sufferings of the famine and large reduction in the population he had collected almost the full revenue.

Under the rule of the later Nawabs the revenue regulations of Akbar which had been more or less observed so long as Bengal remained a province of the empire were completely ignored. The whole system was described by Verelst, Hastings' predecessor, as a competition of force and fraud. Every zamindar and every revenue official was free to choose his own methods of collection. The Nawab and his deputies extracted what they could from the zamindars, the latter plundered all below them and by intricate modes of collection and by complex divisions of the land tried to confine an exact knowledge of the rents to themselves. Hastings' first efforts were to reorganise and simplify the system with a view to stabilise the Company's finances and protect both zamindars and ryots. The Treasury was transferred from Murshidabad to Calcutta. A Board of Revenue was constituted under British control. In 1773 provincial revenue councils were set up in six different centres to supervise the farming of the revenues and to hear appeals in civil suits. A European collector of revenue was appointed in each district with Hindu and Muhammadan assessors to advise in the trial of criminal and civil cases placed under his jurisdiction. The immediate effect of these reforms

was that the *korah* a horrible instrument for flogging recalcitrant zamindars and others disappeared from the cutcherries of Bengal. In order that justice might be administered according to the best principles of Muhammadan and Hindu law Hastings set on foot an inquiry which was followed up later on by Sir William Jones who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, and by many of his successors in the High Court of Calcutta. Hastings' encouragement of Major Rennell, the first scientific geographer of India, enabled the latter to publish his *Bengal Atlas* in 1779, and put him in a position to continue his work after his retirement.

The manufacture of salt and opium was placed under government control and no one in the Company's service was permitted to have a share either in farming the revenues or in government contracts. The villagers appreciated the new Governor's attempts to rule according to the ancient laws of Hindustan and were persuaded to join in putting down dacoity, which was rampant in the provinces. The administrative machinery which Hastings improvised could not be otherwise than very imperfect. But the British empire was always built up far more by personal influence than by bureaucratic machinery. Hastings' influence was everything. He had to reform or create every department of state, to restore order and confidence in the government and to inspire all his subordinates European and Indian with his own high ideals of honour and public duty.

The economies which Hastings was instructed to effect included cutting down the allowances of the child Nawāb. As Shah Ālam had left British protection and put himself in the hands of Sindia Hastings in 1773 stopped the payment of tribute to the Padshah and sold the districts of Allahabad and Kara which had been assigned to him, to the Nawāb of Oudh for fifty lakhs of rupees thus relieving the Company of heavy military charges.

In 1772, before Hastings became Governor the Nawāb of Oudh had concluded a treaty with the Rohilla chief, Hafiz

Rehmat Khan which had been witnessed by Sir Robert Barker as the British commanding officer. In 1773 as the Rohillas continued to evade the fulfilment of their obligations under the treaty, the Nawab, with Sir Robert Barker's support, appealed to Hastings to lend him troops to drive the turbulent Afghan settlers across the Ganges. Hastings, considering that the Company was a party to the treaty, also that the Marāthās were already raiding Rohilkhand and from that base could easily destroy the Company's only reliable ally, agreed to the request on payment of fifty lakhs for expenses. With the help of a British brigade, Oudh in 1773-74 was secured against the Marāthās. A serious danger to the Company's territory was thereby averted. This affair formed the ground of one of the malicious charges brought against Hastings at the famous trial.

Hastings' worst troubles began with his assumption of office as Governor General in 1774 under the 'Regulating Act'. In 1773 the government in England, in view of the vast political responsibility assumed by the Company, resolved to put its affairs under stricter control. The Act, besides restricting the powers of the Directors, gave Hastings, as Governor General in Council, authority over all the British possessions in India. His Council was reduced from eleven to four members. Civil and military officers of the Company were forbidden to take presents or to engage in trade. A Supreme Court of Judicature, consisting of a Chief Justice and three judges, was also established at Calcutta.

The Act was loosely drafted and the respective powers of the Governor General in Council and the Supreme Court were not clearly defined. These and many other defects in the new machinery might have been easily overcome if the members of Council had been well chosen. But Hastings found himself confronted at once with a factious and persistent opposition from his own Council, headed by Philip Francis whose brilliant attainments and unscrupulous character made him a dangerous enemy. The Act gave the Governor General no power of veto,

but only a casting vote Hastings' only loyal supporter was Richard Barwell, an experienced servant of the Company who had enriched himself under the old regime and was perhaps not above suspicion in his private transactions

The self seeking intrigues of Francis brought him a cunning helper in a Brahman of evil reputation, Rajā Nand Kumār, formerly in Siraj ud daulah's service Nand Kumar, who conceived that his sycophancy had not been sufficiently rewarded by Hastings, put into the hands of Francis and his tools in the Council, General Clavering and Colonel Monson, fabricated charges against their President which they immediately brought up for discussion Hastings and Barwell then prosecuted Nand Kumar before the newly constituted Supreme Court for conspiracy It so happened that, a long time before this, Nand Kumar had been involved in a civil suit brought against him by the executor of a native banker Before the conspiracy case came on for trial, he had, by order of the Court, filed a bond which he alleged had been given him by the dead man The opposite party charged him with forgery and he was immediately arrested After a prolonged trial by the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, and the full Court, the jury found him guilty He was condemned to death and executed according to the English law of that time (1775)<sup>1</sup> Francis having ignored his victim's petition for a reprieve

After this scandal Hastings was left in comparative peace for a time, until by the death of Monson two years later he was able to use his casting vote in Council In 1780 Francis returned to England, being badly wounded in a duel with Hastings The failure of the Regulating Act to define the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court soon involved Hastings in fresh difficulties The Court, which observed all the cumbrous procedure of English law, claimed jurisdiction over all the Company's courts which Hastings had set up, as well as over

<sup>1</sup> A parallel case occurred in England two years later, when Dr William Dodd ex chaplain to the King was tried by the King's Bench and executed for forging a bond



all the executive functions of government. Violent conflicts ensued, until Hastings in 1780 adjusted the dispute by arranging that Chief Justice Impey should act as President of the Company's Court of Appeal in Calcutta (*Sadr Dīwān Adālat*), and draw up regulations for the provincial courts. Parliament subsequently (1781) passed an Act legalising the Company's civil and criminal courts and limiting the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to British subjects in Calcutta and elsewhere.

In spite of Hastings' desire to avoid further military enterprises, he was in 1775 forced into war by the action of the subordinate council at Bombay, which was slow to recognise the authority of the Governor General. Shortly after the death of the Pēshwā Mādhu Rāo in 1772, his brother Nārāyan Rāo, who succeeded, had been murdered by his uncle Ragoba. In the struggle for power which ensued, Nānā Farnavis and other Marāthā chiefs supported the claims of Nārāyan's posthumous son, Mādhu Rāo II, while Ragoba sought help from the English at Bombay, promising them Salsette island and Bassein which they were very eager to get. The Bombay Council, without consulting Calcutta, entered into an agreement with Ragoba, and later on (1778) sent an expedition to Poona, which ended disastrously. Hastings saved the situation by sending an expedition from Bengal to Surat and entering into an alliance with the Gaikwār of Baroda (1779). Partly by skilful diplomacy and partly by the brilliant successes of his armed forces, Hastings next broke up a dangerous coalition of the Marāthās, Haidar Ali and the Nizam. Finally through the mediation of Mahādaji Sindia, who also had been worsted in the conflict with the British arms, the Treaty of Salbāi was concluded (1782), which secured peace with the Marāthās for twenty years. Salsette and Elephanta were ceded to Bombay. Mādhu Rāo II was recognised as Pēshwā. Ragoba received a pension, and the district of Broach which the English had taken was handed over to Sindia.

The dangers which Hastings had thus averted were by no

means the only ones which threatened the British settlements. In 1771 Haider Ali, being again attacked by the Marāthās, called upon the Madras Council to fulfil the treaty signed in the previous year.<sup>1</sup> The Madras treasury was empty, and the Nawab of the Carnatic would not join in such an alliance. So the Council remained neutral, and Haider Ali, furious at their broken pledges, which gave the Marāthās free play, began to look for French help. There were still plenty of Frenchmen to be hired as mercenaries in India, and most of the Indian powers made use of them. In 1778 France and England were again at war. Hastings, acting on the Directors' orders, proceeded to seize both Pondichery and Mahé, the Malabar port thus cutting off Haider Ali's communications with France. This action provoked the second Mysore war (1780-84). Haider Ali descended on the Carnatic with an army of 80 000 men and 100 guns. His son, Tipū, cut up Colonel Baillie's detachment of 3700 men near Conjevaram. Sir Hector Munro with the main body shut himself up in Fort St. George and called for help from Calcutta. Hastings was in the midst of his serious entanglements with the Marāthās, but yet found means to meet this new difficulty. He at once despatched the veteran, Sir Eyre Coote, with 1000 men by sea and other reinforcements by land through Orissa. In 1780 Coote won a great victory over Haider Ali at Porto Novo. But the war continued until Haider Ali's death next year, when his son and successor, Tipū Sultan, helped for a time by Bussy, took up the fighting. A French squadron under Admiral de Suffren was troublesome to the British, but with the Peace of Versailles the danger from that quarter ceased, and Tipū, fearing that the Marathas might renew their attacks, at last made terms with the Madras government (Treaty of Mangalore, 1784), much to the indignation of Hastings, who from Tipū's truculent attitude and barbarous treatment of British prisoners foresaw further trouble.

Some of the means by which Hastings, in desperate financial

<sup>1</sup> See p. 208

straits and hampered by his Council found the necessary cash for the payment of the British forces exposed him to scurrilous abuse both in his lifetime and after death. But he claimed nothing more than the Mogul political laws allowed the Company as sovereign rulers and willingly took the odium upon himself as his masters the Company allowed him no alternative which would save the British State and those under its protection in India. In 1781 when the Calcutta treasury urgently needed money for the payment of troops Hastings went to Benares and at imminent risk of his own life arrested the Raja Chait Singh who speculating on the probability of the overthrow of the British power had evaded the contributions in men and money which as the Company's feudatory he was bound to make. The Raja escaped and with an army of 40 000 men led a revolt which but for Hastings' courage and resource might have had serious consequences. The Raja was driven to take refuge in Bundelkhand and Hastings installed his nephew in his place under conditions much more favourable to the Company but the cash found in the Raja's treasury forty lakhs of rupees went to the army as prize money.

It says much for Hastings' qualities as a statesman that in this troubled year (1781) he founded partly at his own charge the Calcutta Madrasa and thus took the first step towards the revival of Muhammadan education in India. In the next year having failed to get cash from Chait Singh he applied to the new Nawab of Oudh Asaf ud daulah for payment of heavy arrears due to the Company. The Nawab was willing if Hastings would agree that the Begams his mother and grandmother should be compelled to relinquish the treasure

who retained a considerable part of the treasure, lived to tell many tales, and bore no malice against Hastings their palace eunuchs, who suffered mild duress, soon grew fat and rich again

History gives no parallel case to compare with that of Hastings To condemn him for his faults or mistakes would be hyper criticism, if not rank hypocrisy If Asoka, Akbar or Solon, as chief agent of a trading company, had been invested with all the responsibilities of kingship yet made subject to the majority of a council dominated by the evil mind of a place-hunter, none of them, being human, would have escaped the lash of political moralists

Hastings retired in 1785, soon after the signing of the Treaty of Mangalore, with the satisfaction of knowing that he had renewed the foundations of good government in Bengal, secured for a time the safety of the British possessions in India and served the Company honestly Hindus and Muhammadans, high and low, agreed that he had deserved well of India But it suited party politicians in England to lend an ear to the malicious slanders of Francis, and the Prime Minister, Pitt, yielded to the clamour for the impeachment of the late Governor General The House of Lords, after a trial which dragged its disgraceful length over seven years, acquitted Hastings on all charges The Directors of the Company saved him from penury, and he lived as a country gentleman in his ancestral home to the ripe old age of eighty six

## CHAPTER XII

CORNWALLIS AND WELLESLEY (1786-1805)

It was now, as Hastings wrote, impossible for the Company to retrace "the perilous and wondrous paths by which they had attained their present elevation" But the British

Government in 1784 were resolved not to aim at any further territorial expansion. British India was to remain as it was on Hastings' retirement.<sup>1</sup> Pitt's India Act (1784) was passed to prevent an aggressive policy. The appointment of the Governor General and Commander in Chief remained in the hands of the Company's Directors, subject to approval by the Crown, but a Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India was to be nominated by the Crown and presided over by one of the King's ministers, in order to scrutinise and check the decisions of a Secret Committee of three Directors of the Company, in whom administrative power should be vested. This arrangement remained in force until 1858, the President of the Board acting as Minister for India. Further legislation removed most of the defects of the Regulating Act which had made Hastings' position untenable.

Lord Cornwallis (1786-93) who had proved his capacity in trying circumstances during the American War, succeeded Hastings after an interval filled by Sir John Macpherson, the senior member of Council. The full powers he had secured enabled him at once to complete Hastings' reforms by insisting that the Company's servants should be paid by adequate fixed salaries only. One of the sources of corruption was the zamindari system, by which the Company collected its land revenue through the Mogul revenue farmers, whose office originally only tenable for life (or for a shorter period at the overlord's pleasure) had tended to become hereditary. Besides the immense difficulty of checking accounts due to the zamindars' systematic methods of concealing the actual rents, the system lent itself to bribery of the supervising staff, which Cornwallis was determined to suppress. The Hindu revenue system, by which the King's officers collected the land tax from the ryots through the village headmen, was not known to Cornwallis.

<sup>1</sup> It included Bengal, Bihar, a small part of Orissa, the districts of Ghazipur and Benares, the Northern Circars excluding Guntur, Madras and small strip round it, Fort St. David and a few small stations on the East Coast, Bombay, Surat and a few small states on the West.

advisers The new Governor General, moreover, distrusted all Indian methods Against the advice of his experienced Councillor, Sir John Shore, he resolved in 1793 to Anglicise the system by declaring the last assessment made in 1786 to be perpetual, expecting that this enactment (called the Permanent Settlement) would at once correct the bad traditions of centuries, make zamindars good and intelligent landlords and the ryots prosperous and happy tenants The actual result was that in a very few years most of the old zamindars had been sold up in default of punctual payment of the government demands The new landlords, mostly speculators and usurers, rack rented their tenants worse than ever, and the system of distraint gave endless opportunities for bribery and corruption Many years of legislative tinkering were required before the Permanent Settlement came to be regarded as advantageous to Bengal landlords and possibly useful as a revenue measure. The cultivators' side of the question has given permanent employment to legislators, lawyers and many others<sup>1</sup>

Cornwallis' judicial reforms were conceived in the same spirit He deprived the zamindars of their magisterial and police functions, abolished the criminal jurisdiction of the Nawāb's agents and increased the highly paid European staff by separating revenue from judicial functions The trial of ordinary civil cases and the control of the police were transferred to European judges appointed to each district court Four courts of appeal were set up in the provincial capitals, the judges going on circuit, as in England, to hear criminal cases In this respect, also, Cornwallis' ignorance of India led him astray His judicial system was both unpractical and impolitic The judges were far too few and too inexperienced for the work, and Cornwallis failed to understand the right

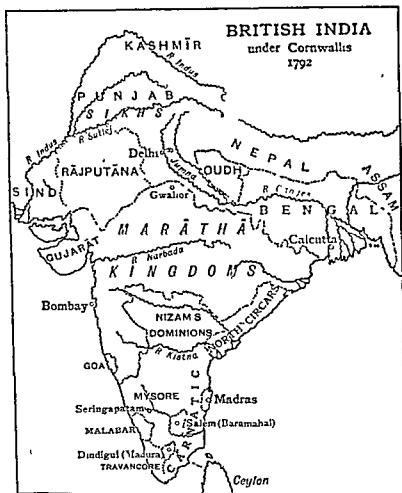
<sup>1</sup> Nearly forty years later Raja Ram Mohun Roy stated before the Select Committee of the House of Commons that the condition of the cultivators had not been improved in any degree though the landlords had benefited The great defect of the settlement was he pointed out, that government had not fixed a maximum rent for the cultivators

measures for rooting out corruption among Indian officials. But his strict integrity and lovable character were invaluable assets for the nascent British power. He chose his European agents well. Jonathan Duncan, appointed Resident of Benares by Cornwallis in 1788, founded the Sanskrit College. He was one of those upright servants of the Company to whose disinterested labours the new India owed much.

Cornwallis again showed his military capacity in the third Mysore War (1790-92) which was forced upon him by Tipu Sultan's ferocious attack upon the Company's ally the Pajā of Travancore at the end of 1789. Cornwallis arranged a treaty of alliance with the Peshwa and the Nizam. In the third year of the war which had been mismanaged by the Madras authorities he assumed command of the British forces in person and dictated a peace under the walls of Seringapatam by which Tipū was forced to cede half of his territories to the allies, to pay a large indemnity and to hand over his two sons as hostages. The share of one third of the ceded territory won by the Company included Malabar, Coorg and parts of the present Salem and Madura districts.

Cornwallis retired in 1793 and was succeeded by Sir John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth) at a very critical time in Maratha affairs. Since the Treaty of Salbāi in 1782, Mahādaji Sindia whose army was strengthened by several brigades of European troops under the command of the French general De Boigne not only maintained his position in the north but had disputed with Nanā Farnavis the control of the Peshwa's government. Upon his death in 1794 his grandnephew, Daulat Rao Sindia succeeded, and the skilful diplomacy of Nanā Farnavis once more united the Marāthā confederacy in an attack upon the Nizam. The latter appealed to the British for help under the old treaty of alliance against Tipu, but Sir John Shore held that he was not bound to interfere in quarrels between any of the three parties to the treaty. His non intervention policy was perhaps strictly just, but it made an enemy

of the Nizam, who after the battle of Khardā (1795) had to cede territory both to the P̄shwā and to the Bhonsle Rājā of Berār, besides paying heavy arrears of *chauth*. Both the



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Nizam and Tipū again sought help from French mercenaries. A year later the Marāthā confederacy was at an end. Sindia's dīwān, hard pressed for money, extracted *chauth*—and a good deal more—from the officials and merchants of Poona by force. The P̄shwā's Court became a hot-bed of faction and intrigue,



and Marāthā politics sank to the level of the demoralised and decadent Moguls

It was this situation which Lord Mornington (Marques Wellesley) whose younger brother Arthur afterwards Duke of Wellington, was then a colonel in the army at Madras, was called upon to face when he took over charge from Lord Teignmouth in 1798. He had served on the Board of Control since 1793 when the French Republic declared war against England and was therefore in close touch with Indian affairs. Napoleon was in Egypt and the fame of his exploits echoed throughout India. Tipu's hopes of revenge were encouraged by French revolutionary agents at the Mysore Court, who were permitted to address the Sultan as 'Citoyen Tipū'. So long as battalions officered by Frenchmen formed the backbone of Indian armies there could be no security for the British possessions or hope of a lasting peace in India.

Wellesley lost no time in carrying out his scheme of "subsidiary alliance," a compact by which the Indian states renounced the French or any European connection except the British, and placed themselves under the protection of the Company. The French battalions were to be disbanded and replaced by a contingent of the Company's troops, for which the state concerned made provision, either by the cession of territory or by payment of a subsidy. The Company undertook to protect the ruler of the state from either external or internal aggression, and not to interfere in internal administration, while all the foreign relations of the state were to be under the control of the Company or its political agent. No Europeans, other than British, were to be in the service of the state except by the Company's consent.

The Nizam was the first to be persuaded that his own safety lay in accepting Wellesley's terms. He was relieved of the difficulty of disbanding 14,000 men under French command by the daring of a lively young subaltern, John Malcolm, the British political agent. Wellesley next approached Tipū, who, vainly expecting Napoleon's help, replied only with

insolence. Having absolute proof of Tipū's negotiations with France Wellesley declared war in February 1799 and laid his plans so well that about ten weeks later Srirangapatam was stormed. Tipu fell fighting bravely within a gateway of the fortress. The fourth and last Mysore War thus ended unexpectedly with the complete collapse of a state which had been a thorn in the British side almost from its foundation thirty-eight years before.

Wellesley, after much deliberation, decided to restore the central part of the late Sultan's territory to the former Hindu dynasty represented by an infant, Krishna Rajā Wodeyar, under British control. The Coimbatore district, Kanara and the rest of the sea coast were retained by the Company. The Nizam received a large slice of the northern districts. The two sons of Tipu were given liberal pensions. In 1801 Wellesley put an end to the dual system of government in the Carnatic, which had proved itself as impossible there as it had been in Bengal. The province was placed under the direct administration of the Madras Government, the heirs of the late Nawāb Muhammad Ali<sup>1</sup> whose intrigues with Tipū had been discovered, being granted a pension. Tanjore, formerly Shāhajā's jagir, was taken over by the Company about the same time on account of a disputed succession.

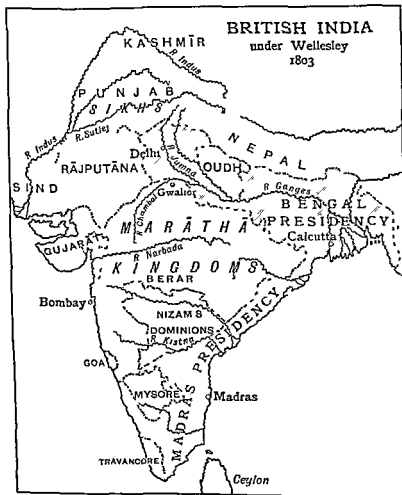
Wellesley next turned his attention to affairs in the north. Oudh was in the same condition as the Carnatic—worse than useless as a defence for the north-west frontier of Bengal for which purpose Hastings had supported the former Nawāb, and suffering from a weak and vicious ruler only kept on his throne by the British power. Albar's measures in such circumstances would have been more drastic than Wellesley's and his feudatory would not have dared to procrastinate. After much hesitation the Nawāb, Siadat Ali, agreed to Wellesley's demands—to disband his own troops and provide for a contingent of the Company's forces by ceding Rohilkhand and part of the Doab including the fortress of Allahabad (1801).

<sup>1</sup> He died in 1795.

The year before Nana Farnavis had died. After the death of Ahly Bai in 1790 no Maratha state continued to fulfil the religious duties of a Hindu government with regard to agriculture, roads, irrigation and useful public works. The great Sivaji's successors were plunging India into the mire of a lawless militarism. The predatory system of warfare which Sivaji had adopted as a temporary expedient had become a fixed principle in Maratha political economy. The strength of the Maratha armies was no longer the sturdy, frugal Maratha yeomanry, fired by zeal for the dharma, but French soldiers of fortune who struggled to drill and discipline a horde of mercenaries and banditti of many races paid only by plunder. Wellesley's policy was rapidly reducing the area upon which their lawless *chaudh* could be levied and was thus a direct challenge to the Maratha states. His opportunity for intervention was given by the Marathas themselves. Nana Farnavis had refused to accept a subsidiary alliance offered by Wellesley after the death of Tipu. But Bajirao II, the last and most ignoble of the Peshwas, after the battle of Poona (1802) in which his own and Sindia's forces were routed by Jaswant Rao Holkar, fled for British protection and in the same year signed the Treaty of Bassein by which he accepted Wellesley's terms on condition of being reinstated as Peshwa. General Arthur Wellesley conducted him back to Poona without opposition, but Sindia, who kept the blind old Peshah Shah Alam under his control at Delhi, combined with the Bhonsle Raja of Berar (Nagpur) in resisting the British demands.

The first year of the second Maratha War (1803-5) added another famous chapter to the military history of the East India Company. General Wellesley in the Deccan with only 4000 men defeated Sindia's army at least seven times as numerous at the battle of Assaye near Ahmadnagar, and the Bhonsle Raja still more decisively at Argaon in Berar shortly afterwards. The Raja made peace in the Treaty of Deogir, giving up Cuttack as the price of a subsidiary alliance. In

Hindustan General Lake's army defeated Sindia's French brigades under Perron, De Boigne's successor, and entered Delhi. After another decisive defeat at Laswārī, Sindia also gave up the fight, and by the Treaty of Surjī Arjungāon



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accepted a subsidiary alliance, surrendering all his territory between the Ganges and the Jumna, besides Ahmadnagar and Broach, as provision for the Company's troops. Some of this territory, however, was made over to the Nizam. Ahmadnagar

was given back to the Pēshwā. Thus ended the first year's campaign.

Next year Holkar, having refused the British terms, was attacked. The campaign began badly. Through Colonel Monson's incompetent handling his sepoy battalions and cavalry were caught in one of the passes of Rajputana and nearly annihilated (1804). The Marāthās then made a raid on Delhi but were repulsed by Colonel Ochterlony. Holkar's main army was defeated at Dig, but General Lake was forced to raise the siege of the Jāt fortress of Bharatpur after several attempts to storm it had failed. The Rajā, however, submitted to a treaty, and Lake was on the point of bringing Holkar to his knees when the Directors in England, on hearing of Monson's defeat, recalled Wellesley (1805) and sent out Cornwallis again, with orders to stop the war.

Another of Wellesley's far seeing projects was also upset by the Directors' anxiety for their dividends. He saw clearly that the want of proper education prevented the Company's civil servants from fulfilling the great responsibilities now imposed upon them. On the foundation of a good European education he would have given them "an intimate acquaintance with the history, languages, customs and manners of the people of India and with the Mahometan and Hindoo codes of law and religion." He would thus have extended the comradeship in arms, already begun with such signal success, to a complete understanding in political, social and religious life. Such an education must necessarily have been given on Indian soil. Wellesley's College of Fort William might have been the foundation of a great Anglo Indian university. Its removal to Haileybury in England was one of the grave political blunders made by the Directors which has never been remedied.

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, 1761-1805

|           | <i>Hindustan</i>                                   | <i>Southern and Western India.</i> |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1761      |                                                    | Haider Ali, Sultan of Mysore       |
| 1763      | War with Mir Kasim                                 |                                    |
| 1764      | Battle of Buxar                                    |                                    |
| 1765-67   | Clive, Governor of Bengal                          |                                    |
| 1767      | Verelst Governor of Bengal                         |                                    |
| 1767-69   |                                                    | <i>First Mysore War</i>            |
| 1769      |                                                    | Treaty of Madras                   |
| 1770      | Famine                                             | Marathās attack Haider Ali         |
| 1772      | Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal                | Nārāyan Rao, Peshwā                |
| 1773      | REGULATING ACT PASSED                              |                                    |
| 1774-85   | WARREN HASTINGS, GOVERNOR GENERAL                  |                                    |
| 1774      | The Rohilla War                                    |                                    |
| 1775-82   |                                                    | <i>First Marāṭha War</i>           |
| 1780-84   |                                                    | <i>Second Mysore War</i>           |
| 1781      | Revolt of Chait Singh                              |                                    |
| 1782      | Treaty of Salbai                                   | Tipu, Sultan of Mysore             |
| 1784      | Asiatic Society of Bengal founded                  | Treaty of Mangalore                |
| 1786-93   | LORD CORNWALLIS, GOVERNOR GENERAL                  |                                    |
| 1788-95   | Trial of Warren Hastings                           |                                    |
| 1790-92   |                                                    | <i>Third Mysore War</i>            |
| 1792      |                                                    | Treaty of Seringapatam             |
| 1793      | COMPANY'S CHARTER RENEWED                          |                                    |
| 1793      | Permanent Settlement of Bengal                     |                                    |
| 1793-98   | SIR JOHN SHORE (LORD TEIGNMOUTH) GOVERNOR GENERAL. |                                    |
| 1794-1805 | LORD MORNINGTON (WELLESLEY), GOVERNOR GENERAL      |                                    |
| 1799      |                                                    | <i>Fourth and last Mysore War</i>  |
| 1801      | Cession of Rohilkhand and Allahabad                |                                    |
| 1802      |                                                    | Treaty of Bassein.                 |
| 1803-5    |                                                    | <i>Second Marāṭhā War</i>          |
| 1803      | Battles of Delhi, Assaye, Laswari and Argāon       |                                    |
| 1804      | War with Holkar                                    |                                    |
| 1805      | Lake repulsed at Bharatpur                         |                                    |

## CHAPTER XIII

THE SIKHS IN THE PUNJAB—GURKHA MARATHA AND PINDARI WARS—CHARTER ACT OF 1813—THE FIRST ENGLISH UNIVERSITY

(1806-23 BARLOW MINTO AND HASTINGS)

WELLESLEY had made the British power paramount in India and like Warren Hastings had pointed out a safe and continuous course for its administrative policy. But owing partly to the mercenary views of the Directors and partly to the short term of office of the successive Governor Generals it was a long time before any of the rulers of British India ventured to stand forth again with a constructive programme. The problems of internal administration were generally left in the hands of British officials who made their career in India until by their researches and patient work in patching up the old machinery and in oiling or re making the new they gradually built up a bureaucratic tradition to serve as the groundwork for the British Indian state. Parliament continued to keep a watchful eye on Indian affairs and from time to time laid down general principles expressing the desire of the British nation that India should be well and wisely governed. The Governor General's policy was usually dictated by orders from the Directors by England's relations with the other European powers or by conditions created by hostile Indian states.

Lord Cornwallis was old and feeble when he returned to India in 1805. He died the same year. Sir George Barlow who succeeded as a stop gap gave effect to the Directors orders of non intervention. He not only prevented General Lake from dictating reasonable terms to Holkar but concluded treaties both with him and Sindia by which the Rajput states were deliberately abandoned to the tender

mercies of their Marātha and Pindārī enemies. Lake resolutely opposed this shameful desertion of friendly states, and resigned when Barlow insisted on it.

A mutiny of the sepoy garrison of Vellore, in the Carnatic, which occurred in 1806, is of no historical importance. The appointment in the same year of a British Conservator of Forests in Malabar is of much greater significance, though the necessity of a systematic control of Indian forests was not recognised until 1864.

Sir George Barlow in 1807 was transferred to the governorship of the Madras Presidency, which by Wellesley's conquests had reached almost its present area. In the revenue settlement of Madras British administrators came in contact with the ancient Hindu ryotwari system, the merits of which, as compared with the zamindari system, had been upheld by Akbar, as they were subsequently by many British officials, notably by Sir Thomas Munro, who, like Akbar, still lives in the grateful memory of the people. But even the best of the Company's servants were unable to cope successfully with all the difficulties of the situation in which they were placed.

Shortly before Sir George Barlow's transfer Lord Minto took over the Governor Generalship of Bengal. In the six years of his term of office (1807-13) he was mostly occupied in combating Napoleon's influence in the East and in dealing with the growing power of the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh, the youthful leader of one of the Sikh *misls*, had earlier obtained a strong position in the Punjab, under the protection of Zamān Shah, the grandson of the Afghan king, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī. By uniting most of the Sikh *misls* into a strong confederacy and collecting a large army drilled and officered by Frenchmen and Italians, he was able in 1801 to assert his independence as Rājā of Lahore. His ambitions went further, and when in 1806 he crossed the Sutlaj and began to claim sovereignty over all the Sikh states between that river and the Jumna, Lord Minto, in spite of official non intervention rules, thought it necessary to take action. Some of the Cis Sutlaj Sikh



states appealed to him for protection, and a British army moved up to support them. At the same time a political officer, Charles Metcalfe, was sent to Amritsar to negotiate and in 1809 a treaty was signed there by which Ranjit Singh bound himself to perpetual friendship with the British, and renounced any rights over the Cis Sutlaj states under British protection while the British Government recognised the Raja as an independent ruler north of the Sutlaj.<sup>1</sup> Ranjit Singh kept his pledged word faithfully until his death thirty years later.

Lord Minto also arranged a similar treaty with the Amirs of Sind and sent embassies to Persia and Afghanistan to counteract French influence in those quarters. More important were his expeditions to capture the French naval bases and commercial harbours in the Indian seas and in the Pacific. In 1810 the Mauritius and neighbouring islands were taken. In the same year the Dutch stations in the Spice Islands, which were also enemy possessions as Holland was then an annexe of Napoleon's empire, were captured. In 1811 an expedition, which Lord Minto accompanied, stormed Batavia and took possession of Java.<sup>2</sup> Military operations had been previously undertaken to put down disorders in Bundelkhand, but in deference to the principle of non intervention the Marāthās and Pindaris were allowed to subject all the weaker states which remained outside the British rāj to their ruthless depredations and unbridled excesses.

In 1813 Parliament began to scrutinise the conditions of British India and the effect of the monopolies granted to the Company before renewing the Charter of 1793. The investigations of the Select Committee showed clearly the impolicy of Cornwallis' plan of filling all the higher judicial and revenue appointments with Europeans. The British law courts were unpopular with both the higher and lower classes of Indians,

<sup>1</sup> In 1819 Ranjit Singh's general Mir Diwan Chand drove the Afghans out of Kashmir where they had perpetrated horrible cruelties.

<sup>2</sup> It was restored to Holland in 1814.

and reliable evidence was almost unobtainable. Neither judges nor police could cope with the increase of crime, especially dacoity, and the civil courts were completely blocked with the enormous accumulation of arrears. On the revenue side the European officials, however zealous and able they might be, were largely in the hands of ill paid and unreliable native subordinates. Parliament, however, did not then see its way to drastic measures of administrative reform, but abolished the commercial monopoly of the Company, except as regards its China trade, and renewed the Charter for twenty years only. At the same time it removed the restrictions which the Company had placed upon Christian missionaries, while it maintained the principle of full religious liberty for all Indians. It further resolved that a lakh of rupees should be set aside annually for encouraging indigenous literature and for promoting scientific knowledge in British India.

The Earl of Moira, afterwards Marquess of Hastings, succeeded Lord Minto in 1813. If not possessed of high intellectual powers, he was a clear thinking and upright man of action who realised that whether India should be governed after British or Hindu ideals or according to the highest principles of Islam, it was essential that the strong arm of the law should be maintained before any plans of social or political reform could be made effective. Most of his term of office (1813-23) was occupied in the necessary police work and in securing the safety of British India.

By Wellesley's subsidiary alliance with Oudh in 1801 British territory had been brought into contact with the Nepal state. The Gūrkhās said to be of Rajput origin, had in 1769 overrun the earlier inhabitants of Nepal the Newars, and were now constantly raiding and appropriating British territory. An unprovoked attack by them on the Company's frontier police stations in 1814 determined Lord Hastings to declare war. The mountainous nature of the country and the obstinate courage of the Gurkha highlanders made this a most

difficult and costly undertaking. The first year of the campaign was marked by serious British reverses, which put all the Marāthā powers and their allies, the Pindāris, on the alert, in expectation of the downfall of the British rāj. At length, at the beginning of 1816, General Ochterlony was in a position to threaten the Nepālese capital, Katmāndu, and terms of peace were settled by the Treaty of Segauli. The Nepālese retired from Sikkim and from the sites upon which the hill-stations of Simla, Naini Tal and Mussoorie were subsequently built. They ceased also to encroach upon the lowlands called the Tarāi.

With a dangerous enemy, soon to prove an invaluable and trustworthy ally, thus subdued, Lord Hastings now turned his attention to the Pindāris, who, both as allies of Sindia and of Holkar, and as independent freebooters, were devastating the Rājput states and had long been a terror to peaceful villages over a vast tract of country, upon which they descended like ravening wolves from their remote hiding places in the Vindhya mountains north of the Narbadā. The break-up of the Mogul empire and the partial pacification effected by Wellesley had let loose upon the country hordes of disbanded soldiery and common ruffians subsisting by warfare, who, having no root in the soil and no religious principles to live for, had at first swelled the ordinary bands of outlaws and criminals. Gradually these Pindāris organised themselves into tribes under recognised leaders, some of whom were ambitious to become war-lords, as many of their forefathers had been. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Amīr Khān, a Pathan chief, had under him a more or less disciplined Pindārī army, with a strong force of artillery. But the residue of the Pindāris were common marauders, male and female, who, in bands sometimes 3000 strong, mounted on ponies or camels carrying several days' provisions, would ride thirty or forty miles at a stretch over country unpassable for a regular army until their objective—villages worth looting—was reached. Then they divided and fell upon their victims with diabolical fury, until with

pitiless torture, murder and ravishment they had extracted all the money and valuables they could discover, seized all the cattle worth having and burnt or destroyed what they could not take away

The Pindārī hordes had raided British territory for several years, but it was not until 1816, when Amīr Khān laid siege to Jūpur and over 300 villages in the Ganjam district were ruined in one fell swoop of these savage bandits, that Lord Hastings determined that drastic measures were necessary. By a fine stroke of statesmanship he made it an occasion to rescue the Rājput states from the condition into which they had been brought by Barlow's desertion of them, and to bring about a final settlement with the Marāthās. He first renewed friendly relations with the principal Rājput states and brought them into line with British policy by treaties which guaranteed their future security. Amīr Khan was detached from the Marāthā alliance and put on a better road by the grant of the Nawābship of Tonk in Rājputāna. The Pēshwā, Bājī Rāo, who had further disgraced himself by conniving at the murder of an envoy sent to Poona by the Gaikwār under British safe-conduct, was forced to surrender his criminal minister, Trimbhajī, and to agree to a modification of the Treaty of Bassein. Āpā Sahib, regent for the Bhonsle Rājā of Berār, also entered into a subsidiary alliance. Sindia was detected in intrigues with Nepāl, but was overawed by the extent of Lord Hastings' military preparations. The Governor General had behind him the largest army hitherto assembled in British India, 120,000 men and 300 guns, Sindia reluctantly agreed to sign a treaty and give up two fortresses as security.

The campaign against the Pindāris lasted only a few months and was concluded at the beginning of 1818, by which time the remnants of their bands had been driven back to their mountain haunts and surrounded by a military cordon. Chitū, the most dreaded of their three chief leaders, escaped to the jungles, where the tigers did justice according to Sukrāchārya's code. The second, Karīm Khān, surrendered and was given

an estate upon which he and his band might settle peacefully. The third took refuge with Sindia, but was given up and committed suicide in prison.

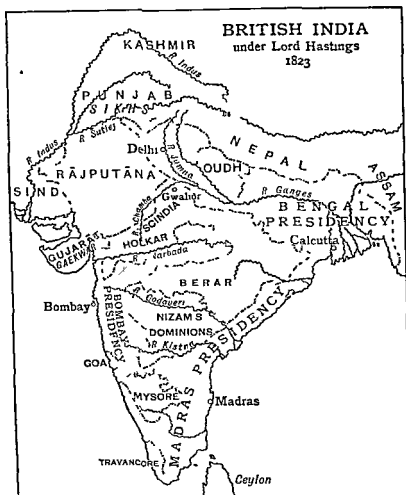
While Lord Hastings, whose ability as a general was made more conspicuous by his fine tact and genuine kindness, was breaking up this huge criminal organisation, Bajī Rāo, Āpā Sahib Bhonsle and the chiefs of Indore made a last desperate effort to shake off British control (third Marathā War). Bajī Rāo's army fell upon the British Resident's sepoy contingent at Kirki, near Poona, but was repulsed with heavy loss (November 1817). Two more defeats, at Koregāon and Ashti, in the following year settled the fate of the Peshwā. He surrendered to Sir John Malcolm, was deposed by Lord Hastings, but allowed to retire to Bithūr, near Cawnpore, with a munificent pension of 8 lakhs. It was from this retreat that his adopted son, Nānā Sahib, plotted against the British rāj and supplemented the last Peshwā's evil record by the foul murder of women and children in 1857.

At Nāgpur, Āpā Sahib, who had now made himself Rājā, followed Bajī Rāo's treacherous example. But fourteen hundred of the Company's sepoys under Captain Fitzgerald held out against the Marathā army, more than twelve times their number, and on the arrival of British reinforcements Āpā Sahib surrendered. The Regent of Indore, Tulsi Bai, Jaswant Rāo Holkar's widow, tried to negotiate a peace with the British general, Sir Thomas Hislop, but was murdered by a Pathan officer. In the battle of Mahūdpur, which followed immediately (December 1817), Holkar's forces were routed. A treaty was signed in the following month.

In the final settlement (1818) the Peshwa's office was abolished and his territory, excepting an appanage assigned to the Rājā of Sātārā as Sivaji's heir, was annexed by the Company. The Bombay Presidency was thereby constituted nearly as it now stands and British territory united over nearly the whole coast line. Āpā Sahib was deposed.

The Nāgpur or Berār state ceded its districts north of the

Narbadā Its boundaries, together with those of Holkar and Sindh, were strictly defined, and with the end of the sinister domination of the Marāthā chieftains in Māhārāshtra the



Eme y W. 1823. 50.

political atmosphere of India began to be cleaner and more wholesome

Lord Hastings himself was almost fully occupied in completing Wellesley's work of pacification, but his term of office was also memorable for educational progress in Bengal. The

Hindu College at Calcutta was founded in 1817 under official auspices 'to instruct the sons of Hindus in the European and Asiatic languages and sciences'. There was, however, greater driving power behind the brilliant work, commenced in 1800, of an English weaver, Joshua Marshman, a printer, William Ward, and the son of a village schoolmaster, William Carey,<sup>1</sup> when, being refused permission to preach Christianity in the Company's territories, they sought protection under the Danish flag at Frederiknagore (Serampore), and set up a printing press and a paper mill. In 1818 they published the first vernacular newspaper, *Samachar Darpan*, a weekly, devoted to their religious propaganda. The Serampore Mission Press in its early days, besides a great number of vernacular editions of the Bible and one of the *Ramāyana*, published numerous lexicons, grammars, scientific and historical works and school books, both in English and in the vernaculars. Carey, in addition to his duties as professor of Sanskrit, Bengali and Marāthī at the College of Fort William, continued the botanical researches begun by Roxburgh, one of the Company's medical officers, and edited the latter's chief scientific works, *Hortus Bengalensis* and *Flora Indica*. Marshman's interests, like those of his Indian forerunner, Kabir, were chiefly theological, but his Christian propaganda included the instruction of the weavers of Serampore in the technical improvements which, towards the end of the eighteenth century, had more than doubled the productive power of the English hand weaver. His work in this direction bore great fruits.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately it was not appreciated or followed up systematically, either by Indians or Europeans, until the beginning of the twentieth

<sup>1</sup> Carey began his career as a shoemaker's apprentice.

<sup>2</sup> The author discovered about the beginning of the present century, that the only part of India where these improvements were generally known by village weavers was in the districts round Serampore. Here about 10 000 of them still held their own against power loom products entirely by the use of these improvements. Marshman, the weaver missionary, must be regarded as the real founder of the modern movement for the preservation of the Indian hand loom industry.

century Marshman's son, J C Marshman the historian, founded the Serampore College, which in 1827, by a diploma granted by the Danish king, Frederick VI was recognised as a university, the first of its kind in India

The Christian propaganda inspired a learned Bengali Brahman, Ram Mohun Roy, to combat its vigorous attacks on Hinduism by publishing English and vernacular editions of the Upanishads and the Vedānta Sūtras. At the same time he advocated the reform of orthodox Brahminical ritual in the direction of Christian protestantism, and the abolition of inhuman practices like *sati*, which were not in accordance with the true spirit of the Vedas. In 1828 Rām Mohun Roy and his followers founded the Brahmo Samaj, the first of modern Hindu reform associations. Indian vernacular journalism was created by the controversy started by the *Samachar Darpan*, and continued for the next thirty years to renew the age long religious discussions of Indian debating halls.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FIRST BURMESE WAR—SOCIAL REFORMS AND ENGLISH EDUCATION—CHARTER ACT OF 1833

(1823-36, AMHERST AND BENTINCK)

LORD AMHERST succeeded Lord Hastings in 1823, after a short interregnum and was soon involved in the first Burmese War (1824-26). This was brought about by the attempts of a warlike dynasty, founded in Upper Burma by Alaungpra in 1752, to extend its conquests into India. The Burmese armies had previously seized Assam, Cachār and Manipur. In 1823 they attacked the British outposts to enforce their ruler's claim to Eastern Bengal as an ancient province of the Burmese Empire. The war, after many difficulties had been



overcome was ended by the treaty of Yandabo (1826) which gave the Company the provinces of Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim. In the same year a slur on British military prestige was wiped out by the storming of the fortress of Bharatpur which had resisted Lord Lake in 1805. A cousin of the deceased Raja, believing the citadel to be impregnable, had deposed the rightful heir and defied the Governor General. Lord Combermere, in command of the Company's troops, took the fortress after a short siege and restored the *status quo*.

In 1828 Lord William Bentinck, who had had previous Indian experience as Governor of Madras, succeeded as Governor General in Bengal. After effecting various economies in the civil and military services necessitated by the heavy cost of the Burmese War, he at once turned his attention to a great social reform upon which his mind was set—the prevention of *sati*. The practice of this cruel rite had been prohibited in Maharashtra and a few other Hindu states, but it was extremely prevalent in Bengal, where from 500 to over 800 women submitted to it yearly, by no means always voluntarily. Lord William, having found out that he could rely upon the active support of Ram Mohun Roy and other leaders of Hindu opinion, passed in 1829 the regulation making *sati* a criminal offence. Subsequent legislation extended the prohibition to the whole of British India.<sup>1</sup> The suppression of *thugi* (thuggee), the murderous trade of one of the ancient robber guilds, whose activities had been vastly extended by the political disorders of the eighteenth century, was next taken in hand. After about eight years of strenuous police work, directed by Sir William Sleeman, the organisation was completely broken up and the highways of India became safer than they had been for centuries.

The after-effects of the political demoralisation of the previous century were also felt in the condition of many of the

<sup>1</sup> Bentinck also made unsuccessful efforts to put a stop to the horrible human (meriah) sacrifices of the Khonds of Orissa. More effective measures were taken about twenty years later.

feudatory states, as well as in British India. The Rājput princes released from the oppression of the Marāthās, once more fell upon each other. Corruption and disorder were rampant in Oudh and in the Nizam's dominions. The ryots of Mysore incensed at the increasing exactions of the Rājā's government, rose in rebellion. In Coorg the Rājā murdered most of his own relatives, male and female, treated his subjects with similar unbridled ferocity, and openly declared his hostility to the British rāj. The Governor General after the restoration of order in Mysore, deposed the Rājā and placed the state under a British Commissioner (1831). Coorg was also occupied by a British force. The Rājā was deported and, as he had exterminated all his male heirs, the state was annexed (1834). The extinction of the ruling house also led to the annexation of Cāchār (1830) a part of Indian territory recovered from the Burmese. But except under special circumstances when it seemed to be the only cure for misgovernment, Lord William Bentinck was opposed to the policy of annexation, although if the principle of self-determination had been carried out, probably most of the states of India in his days would have voluntarily placed themselves under British rule.

The comparative peace which India enjoyed during his term of office enabled Lord William Bentinck to devote most of his attention to administrative reforms, chief among which was the admission of Indians to responsible judicial and executive appointments from which Cornwallis had excluded them. the abolition of Cornwallis' English pattern provincial law courts and the substitution of the vernaculars for the Mogul official language, Persian in judicial proceedings.

With curious inconsistency Bentinck lent himself to illogical proposals for Anglicising Indian education put forward by the Board established to carry out the provisions of the Charter Act of 1833. That Act, intended by Parliament to infuse the democratic spirit of the British Reform Act of the previous year into Indian administration, had ordained

that no Indian subject of the King should, "by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be debarred from any office in British India. The question which presented itself to Lord Wilham and his Councillors was, how could Indians be qualified to fill the offices thus thrown open to them? Should they be taught Western ideas and sciences indirectly through their vernaculars and through their own classical languages, Sanskrit and Arabic, one of which all educated Indians at that time knew? Or should they be obliged in schools supported by Government, to learn directly from English teachers and from English school books? To a modern educationist it might seem astonishing that such a question should have arisen. But British statesmen in those days had not begun to touch educational problems at home, in India opinions were divided into two camps—the Orientalists or vernacularists, and the Anglicists.

Both sides recognised the ultimate political goal towards which the Charter Act pointed. Most, if not all, were agreed that Indian literature contained nothing worthy of preservation for its own sake. The case for the vernacularists was admirably put by a Bengal civilian, Brian H. Hodgson,<sup>1</sup> who was in a good position to judge from having been in close touch with the people outside the European commercial centres. He tried to lift the question into a higher plane than that of mere administrative utility. "Learning," he said, "was not in itself a blessing—it is only so according to its use and application." "The end of education was to uplift the people from the dust and to breathe that generous fire into their torpid souls, the kindling of which must be the beginning of their regeneration." After citing the historical

<sup>1</sup> Distinguished for his researches in zoology and studies of the archaeology, religion and history of Nepal. His views on education were first set forth in three letters to the *Friend of India* over the name of Junius. They were reprinted in his own name in a pamphlet entitled *The Pre-eminence of the Vernaculars or the Anglicists answered*, published by the Serampore Press in 1837.

precedent of the vernacularisation of official procedure in England which had helped to lay the foundation of political liberty, he prophesied that the use of a foreign language like English as the official medium of instruction in India would create political dangers by disorganising Indian society, would benefit the few but keep the masses in ignorance, and "generate or confirm servile intellectual habits, especially when combined with the absence of political liberty" There were, he pointed out, two sides to the educational problem—the education of the governors as well as of the governed One of the great evils of the Mogul regime had been that the official language, Persian, was unknown to the great mass of the governed It would be true statesmanship "to bind the many to ourselves by community of language let us vernacularise *ourselves* and our *knowledge* for the common benefit

A part of Hodgson's plan for effecting this was the establishment of normal schools for the training of vernacular teachers, so that the existing Hindu and Muhammadan educational machinery might have been fully utilised In higher education he would have made Sanskrit and Arabic literature the instruments, not the direct means and end of instruction They should only be taught at the public expense on condition that the students simultaneously learnt English or modern science The decision in the controversy rested with the Law Member of Council, Mr Thomas (Lord) Macaulay, recently appointed under the Charter Act, who was also nominated as President of the Board of Education Being entirely ignorant of Indian conditions he naturally took the side of the Anglicists He was supported enthusiastically by another newcomer, an eloquent young Scotch missionary, Alexander Duff, as well as by many Bengalis, who were more captivated by the allurements of office held out to them than by the religious arguments Lord William Bentinck was carried away by the Law Member's fine rhetoric, and in his last year of office (1835) issued the Resolution

which decided that "the funds appropriated to education would be best employed in English education only"

The controversy has considerable historical importance, but the drift of it and the consequences of the decision then taken are not often correctly understood. Macaulay did not, as is often assumed, give India freer access to Western literature and sciences. Those who benefited pecuniarily by his literary scheme were the few who least needed help. Even if no English schools had been opened the education given for long ages in Indian seminaries and homes would have enabled the intellectual *élite* of India to get access to English literature easily, and thereby all the real benefit of it would have slowly filtered downwards. But as long as only the most inferior posts in the Company's service were open to Indians only a few took an active interest in Western learning. The British Parliament, not Macaulay, provided the necessary stimulus. The educational system started by Macaulay simply shelved the main question, the education of the Indian masses, in which he himself professed the deepest interest, until the difficulties of dealing with it had increased tenfold. Though the main root of the troubles of British administrators—then and now—lay in the economic and moral consequences of the prolonged Turkish, Pathan and Mogul domination in India, Macaulay's failure to grasp the great opportunities of his time added immensely to the task of modern educationists. Moreover, the stamp of inferiority officially put upon all Indian culture by Macaulay and his successors<sup>1</sup> automatically closed many avenues of employment to Indians and thus frustrated to no small extent the generous intentions which prompted

<sup>1</sup> The controversy continued for some time after Macaulay's departure and Lord Auckland made some concessions to the vernacularists. But Hodgson fell into official disfavour and Duff who vainly believed that India Anglicised would inevitably become Christian continued to hold the ear of Government both in Calcutta and in London. He inspired Sir Charles Wood's educational despatch in 1854 and led the organisation of the Calcutta University until he finally left India in 1863.

the passing of the Charter Act of 1833. The best results of Bentinck's educational programme were achieved by the medical schools. The Calcutta and Madras Medical Colleges were both opened in 1835.

Another prolonged parliamentary inquiry preceded the renewal of the Company's Charter for the third time since 1773. Besides the important provisions mentioned above, the Act abolished the last of the Company's monopolies, the China trade, and put an entire stop to its trading activities. The legislative powers of the government of India were formally recognised and a Commission presided over by the Law Member was appointed to take in hand the revision and codification of British Indian laws. The territories of Agra and Oudh were constituted into a fourth Presidency—the North-Western Provinces,<sup>1</sup> and Lord William Bentinck was made the first Governor General of India. The revenue settlement of the new presidency revealed many new difficulties, caused by prolonged political disorders, in defining fairly the respective rights of government, landlords and cultivators. The validity of the titles to rent free lands, granted both by Hindu and Muslim governments for the endowment of religion and learning, was a specially complicated problem in which the arbitrary decisions of British officials, who had no knowledge of local history, often caused much bitter feeling.

After Bentinck's departure, in 1835, Sir Charles Metcalfe acted as governor general for a year. But he incurred the Directors' displeasure by abolishing the stringent regulations enacted for controlling the newspaper press, then mostly European. He passed an Act by which journalists were made liable only to the ordinary laws concerning seditions and libel, and resigned in consequence of the Directors' disapproval. Lord Auckland succeeded in 1836.

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently reduced to the status of a lieutenant governorship, now the Agra province.

## CHAPTER XV

AFGHAN, SIKH AND BURMESE WARS—DALHOUSIE'S RECONSTRUCTION WORK—THE DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

(1836-56, AUCKLAND ELLENBOROUGH, HARDINGE AND DALHOUSIE)

AFGHANISTAN, formerly a province of the Mogul Empire, had been as we have seen, an independent kingdom since the death of Nādir Shah of Persia. In 1809 Shah Shujā, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Durrānī, was driven from the throne of Kābul, and after a period of fighting and disorder, Dōst Muhammad Khān, the son of a former minister, assumed the title of Amīr. Shah Shujā became a pensioned refugee in British territory. Lord Auckland, a weak party politician, had been given a free hand to deal with the supposed danger to British India from Russia's influence at the Persian Court and the rapid advance of her dominions in Central Asia after the failure of Napoleon's schemes. His first step was to send an envoy, Captain Burnes, to Kābul to negotiate with the Amīr. Dōst Muhammad, finding that the Company would not agree to hand him back Kandahar, which their ally, Ranjit Singh, had seized, turned deaf ear to the British envoy and made a diplomatic demonstration in favour of Russia, whose agent had arrived at Kabul.

Shah Shujā re entered Kābul with the British troops and was solemnly reinstated (1839). A considerable British force remained to support him, but the discipline, both of officers and men, was extremely lax, and the Afghan tribes, led by Dōst Muhammad's son, soon rose in revolt. In 1841 the political agent, Sir William Macnaghten, was murdered and the tribesmen, helped by the folly of the British general, forced the army to quit Kābul, leaving their guns behind. The Afghan blood-lust was up and, as the long retreating column—4500 fighting men with 12,000 camp followers—straggled through the winter snow in the deep defiles of the Kābul valley the Ghulzais fell upon them savagely. They slew all save 120 prisoners and one man, Dr Brydon, who reached the fort of Jalālabād, held by a small force under General Sale (January 1842).

At this juncture Lord Ellenborough (1842-44) succeeded Lord Auckland. He was sensible enough to leave the military situation in the hands of the British generals. Sale beat off the Afghan attacks. General Pollock's army, with a Sikh contingent, relieved him, forced the Khybar pass and joined hands with General Nott, who advanced from Kandahar. Nine months after the great disaster Kābul was reoccupied, the British prisoners were released and the great bazaar was blown up as a punishment. Shah Shujā having been killed, the British army was withdrawn and Dōst Muhammad was allowed to resume his throne unconditionally (1842).

Lord Ellenborough in his conduct towards the Amirs of Sind, who were charged with neglect to furnish supplies during the war, was no better than his predecessor. He was determined on the ground of military expediency to annex the province and finding that Colonel Outram the political agent, was too friendly towards the Amirs, he invested Sir Charles Napier with full powers to negotiate. The latter's aggressive attitude resulted in a Belūchī attack on the Residency. War was then declared. The Amirs were defeated, first at Māni and soon afterwards at Dabo. They were exiled and their territories annexed to the Bombay Presidency (1843).



## CHAPTER XV

AFGHAN, SIKH AND BURMESE WARS—DALHOUSIE'S PECOR  
STUCTION WORK—THE DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

(1836-36 AUCKLAND ELLENBOROUGH HARDINGE AND  
DALHOUSIE)

AFGHANISTAN formerly a province of the Mogul Empire had been as we have seen an independent kingdom since the death of Nadir Shah of Persia. In 1809 Shah Shuja the grandson of Ahmad Shah Durrani was driven from the throne of Kabul and after a period of fighting and disorder Dost Muhammad Khan the son of a former minister assumed the title of Amir. Shah Shuja became a pensioned refugee in British territory. Lord Auckland a weak party politician had been given a free hand to deal with the supposed danger to British India from Russia's influence at the Persian Court and the rapid advance of her dominions in Central Asia after the failure of Napoleon's schemes. His first step was to send an envoy Captain Burnes to Kabul to negotiate with the Amir. Dost Muhammad finding that the Company would not agree to hand him back Kandahar which their ally Ranjit Singh had seized turned a deaf ear to the British envoy and made a diplomatic demonstration in favour of Russia whose agent had arrived at his Court.

This affront determined Lord Auckland to restore Shah Shuja to his throne with the help of a British army. A tripartite treaty was drawn up between the Company Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja. War was declared in 1838 and the friendly Baluchi chiefs of Sind were forced into the business in defiance of treaties previously made with them because the plan of campaign required that their territories should be used as a military base. Dost Muhammad after Ghazni had fallen could make no effective resistance and eventually surrendered.

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More helpful for British prestige was the Act passed in the same year which brought the law of British India with regard to slavery into agreement with that of England. A mild form of domestic slavery, similar to that of modern Persia, had existed in Hindu India from Vedic times. The system had extended and become much more harsh under Muslim rule, the legislation of 1843 was a continuation of Bentinck's humane policy.

Interference in the affairs of the Gwalior state in the same year was called for by troubles arising on the death of Jankajī Sindia, the adopted son of Daulat Rāo. The army, which had grown out of all proportion to the size of the state, was insubordinate and threatened mischief. When negotiations with the Rānī's representatives had failed to bring about a reduction, the British army entered Sindia's territories and, after battles at Mahārājpur and Panar, the disbandment of one third of the state's forces was effected and the government put on an orderly footing without annexation.

In 1844 the Directors, exercising their powers under the Charter Act, recalled Lord Ellenborough. He was succeeded by Sir Henry (Lord) Hardinge, whose term of office (1844-48) was mostly filled by the troubles arising in the Lahore state. Ranjit Singh, though he outraged Sikh religion by drunkenness and debauchery and fleeced the Punjab ryots unmercifully, kept his powerful army well in hand with the help of European officers. Upon his death military control passed entirely into the hands of the *panchayats*, or committees of the Khālśa, and all discipline was at an end. The Khālśa was split up into factions supporting rival candidates for the throne. The legitimate line having failed with the death of Ranjit's son and grandson, two pretenders arose. When the first was murdered the choice of the Khālśa rested with the second, Dhulip Singh, a child of five years, whose mother, Jindan, was appointed Regent (1845).

The Khālśa was spoiling for war and loot. Rumours of British designs upon the Punjab were afloat, a natural sequence

of previous events in Sind. The Maharāni and her Brahman lover, Lāl Singh the Divān sent the Sikh army into British territory, offering it Delhi as a prize (December 1845). The Governor General, with the Commander in Chief, Sir Hugh Gough took the field on the British side. In the course of two months four desperate battles were fought, at Mudki, Firuz shahar Aliwāl and Sobraon, in all of which the Sikhs were defeated. At Sobraon they were driven back across the Sutlaj, with a loss of 10,000 men, and early in 1846 Lord Hardinge dictated terms of peace at Lahore. The Sikh army was reduced to 32,000 men. An indemnity of a crore and a half rupees was demanded, part of which was furnished by the Lahore treasury, the rest being paid by Rāja Gulāb Singh, the chieftain of Jammu, on condition of being recognised as the rightful ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. The modern Kashmir state was thus constituted. The land between the Sutlaj and the Biās rivers was ceded to the Company. The existing Sikh government was recognised, but Major (Sir Henry) Lawrence, who was appointed Resident, soon won the confidence of the Sikh Durbar by his tact and courage, and became the virtual ruler. Lāl Singh was removed from office and the intrigant Maharāni sent away from Lahore.

In civil administration there stands to Lord Hardinge's credit the commencement of the Ganges Canal, projected as a famine prevention measure in Lord Auckland's administration, but suspended by Lord Ellenborough. This great work led to the foundation of the Roorkee College of Engineering. Lord Hardinge also promoted active measures for the suppression of *sati* and infanticide in the Native states, and took some steps towards the preservation of Indian monuments.

The Earl of Dalhousie (1848-56), whose official experience had been gained as President of the Board of Trade in England, took over the Governor Generalship two years after the conclusion of the first Sikh War, Lord Hardinge assuring him that he need not "fire another gun in India for seven years. But the Sikh military oligarchy, to whom fighting was the only

The burden of taxation which Rānjit Singh had laid upon the ryots was greatly reduced. Agriculture was also assisted by roads and irrigation works. Village schools were opened, and in a few years the Punjab was again, after many centuries, on the way to prosperity and contentment. Dhulip Singh retired to England to enjoy his pension and during the Mutiny the Punjab stood firm in support of their new rulers.

While Lord Dalhousie was engrossed in this congenial work, both in the Punjab and in the rest of British India, he found himself suddenly involved in a war with Burma (1852). The Burmese Government since 1824 had by no means abated its arrogance towards foreigners. In 1851 Lord Dalhousie, with no desire for war, demanded reasonable redress for outrages on British merchants. A naval envoy sent to Rangoon was insulted, and, contrary to explicit instructions, commenced hostilities. Lord Dalhousie accepted the consequences and declared war. After a few months' fighting, Rangoon, together with the whole province of Pegu, was occupied and annexed, so that Upper Burma was completely cut off from the sea and the eventual fall of the Burmese dynasty<sup>1</sup> became inevitable.

Dalhousie's policy towards the feudatory states under British protection was the logical outcome of his firm belief that India's regeneration was impossible except through English education and full direct British control. And there were in the first half of the nineteenth century, and even afterwards, good reasons for such a belief. The type of Indian ruler, a despotic, cruel and rapacious military adventurer, which the conditions of the eighteenth century had produced, was not altered for the better when, under Wellesley's subsidiary system, he found himself protected from his subjects' wrath by the Company's forces. Usually he made himself less fit for rule by indolence, vicious pleasures and total disregard of his subjects' interests. It so happened that in Lord Dalhousie's time not a few of the existing ruling houses were left without direct heirs, and the question arose as to

<sup>1</sup> In the third Burmese War (1885)

whether the adoption of a son, according to Indian custom, should be recognised or whether the states should be considered as having lapsed to the paramount power

The Directors had previously laid down the principle that such recognition should be regarded as a special mark of favour and approbation, though all existing claims of right should be scrupulously respected—a somewhat ambiguous ruling, as according to Hindu law an adopted son had an undoubted right to succeed, if the Council of State approved. By the strict law of Mogul India [Mogul law was still valid, and the puppet Padshāh at Delhi, Bahādur Shah, was treated as an equal by the Governor General] a feudatory prince had no absolute right to choose his successor, but in practice the issue rested on the military strength of the two parties in the case, and the Hindu custom had for a long time been tacitly recognised

The first case which came before Lord Dalhousie was that of Sātāra, Sivājī's original principality which Lord Hastings had preserved in 1819. The last Rājā, shortly before his death in 1848, had adopted a boy. But, though there had been no complaint against the Rājā, Lord Dalhousie decided that the general interests of the state would be best served by annexation—the adopted son being allowed to retain the Rājā's personal property. The same principle was applied to four similar cases, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Baghat and Udaipur (in Bengal), between 1849 and 1852. In 1853 the Rājā of Nāgpur, one of the larger Marathā states, died, leaving no heir, direct or adoptive, the widow of the Rājā of Jhānsī also claimed to act as regent on behalf of an adopted son. In both these cases also Lord Dalhousie decided in favour of annexation. He also refused to allow the life pension of 8 lakhs granted to Bājī Rao, the ex-Peshwa, to pass on to his adopted son, the Nānā Sahib—who, however, inherited a goodly fortune of 28 lakhs—or to continue the titles and pensions granted to the ex Nawāb of the Carnatic and the Rājā of Tanjore. Finally, he notified that, on the death of Bahadur Shah, his heir must

quit Delhi and retire from the throne of the Pādshāhs with a pension and an honorary title.

There is no doubt that in these drastic measures Lord Dalhousie acted from the highest sense of public duty. He was in most cases only carrying out the instructions of the Directors, or correcting the financial extravagance of his predecessors. But this rigid application of the "doctrine of



Emery Walker Ltd. & Co.

lapse" created the utmost alarm in all the courts of the feudatory princes, which was not allayed until the doctrine itself was disavowed by Lord Canning in 1859. Lord Dalhousie lent his full support to the Anglicist party in this as in other matters. In 1854 Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, sent out a comprehensive despatch to indicate the practical application of Macaulay's educational

planned the first Indian railways introduced a cheap postal system and the electric telegraph gave a great impetus to irrigation works and brought to completion the Ganges Canal Dalhousie like Macaulay and other Victorian statesmen was an ardent disciple of the economist Adam Smith It was left to later generations to discover that political and economical axioms are only relatively true and that the human factor in economics counts more than the machine

One of Lord Dalhousie's last official acts before he handed over charge to Lord Canning was to depose the King of Oudh<sup>1</sup> Wajid Ali Shah and annex his territory in accordance with the Directors' orders Though the rulers of Oudh had been useful allies of the Company they had for many years proved their total incapacity to govern Repeated protests from the paramount power had been unheeded and the condition of their country had long been a crying scandal In 1856 the king was pensioned off and removed to Calcutta

The Company's Charter was renewed for an unspecified term in 1853 The most important provisions of the new Charter Act were the withdrawal of the right of patronage from the Court of Directors Appointments to the Civil Service which had hitherto been by nomination of the Board were thrown open to competition The province of Bengal was placed under the administration of a Lieutenant Governor

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GREAT MUTINY AND AFTER—END OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

(1856-62—CANNING)

The inflammable material which had accumulated during Lord Dalhousie's strenuous eight years of office did not wait

<sup>1</sup> The Nawab of Oudh had been allowed to assume the title of King in 1819



principles. A separate department of Public Instruction was to be formed in each province. Universities were to be established in the Presidency towns and the system of vernacular education already begun in the north west provinces and the Punjab was to be widely extended. Dr Duff, who inspired the despatch in London was also the leading spirit in the foundation of the chief university of India at Calcutta at the time when the passions aroused by the horrors of the Mutiny lent adventitious aid to Anglicist theories. Brian Hodgson, the most clear minded educational thinker of his time, would have quickened the old universities of India into new life by the gift of the finest products of Western experience. Thus Indian culture would have shown its latent strength far more quickly the rulers and ruled would have benefited each other in deepening and cleansing the Indian well of knowledge. Duff as interpreter of Macaulay's principles, established Indian education on the lines of the London University of 1837, leaving Indian art and architecture, political economy and sociology, philosophy and metaphysics in the hands of archaeological workers to be treated as interesting but obsolete relics of a bygone civilisation. Europe has since arrived at a much deeper appreciation of Asiatic culture but India still suffers, economically and intellectually, from the educational short sightedness of the nineteenth century.

Lord Dalhousie had a great genius for organisation, and gave India the full benefit of his experience at the Board of Trade at a time when mechanical invention and industrial activity were beginning to change the face of Europe. He reorganised the whole machinery of administration, created a Department of Public Works, pushed forward the renewal of country roads in India on the method introduced into England by McAdam some twenty years previously,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Road metalling was evidently practised in Hindu India for it is clearly described in Sukracharya's Code, but in Dalhousie's time the tradition was almost extinct. The Grand Trunk Road the first of the great roadways built under British rule was begun in 1836. By 1856 the first 900 miles from Calcutta to Karnal were completed.

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long for the spark to set it ablaze. A year after Lord Canning assumed office in 1856 the Great Mutiny began. It was for the most part a military revolt, not a popular rising, though the fears and prejudices which broke the loyalty of the sepoys were shared by large numbers of people. Ruling families, landholders and disbanded soldiery—with their numerous relatives and dependents—deprived of their land rents and no honourable career open for them. Brahmans who despised the new learning excluded from offices they had enjoyed even under Muslim rule. the too busy brooms of benevolent bureaucrats sweeping up the dust and grime of ages—an aggressive educational and religious propaganda insidiously attacking Indian social life—here was stuff enough for many grievances, real and imaginary. The Bengal army, in which the trouble began, was largely recruited by high caste Hindus from Oudh whose privileges and incomes were curtailed by the recent annexation of the province. Railways and steam boats by which the sepoys might be suddenly transported to strange lands across the black water, were portents as ominous as the magic weapons of the *Mahabharata*.

But India had been accustomed to far worse provocations than these. The direct cause of the Great Mutiny was the same as that of many minor outbreaks<sup>1</sup> which had occurred from time to time in the Company's army—the carelessness and ignorance of the responsible authorities when military requirements conflicted with the religious feelings of the sepoys. The Enfield rifle first introduced into the British army in 1855, was later on issued to the sepoys with the usual instructions to bite the end of the cartridge. The latter was greased, it was said, with the fat of cows and pigs—an abomination both for Hindus and Muhammadans. When the full consequences of the blunder were realised it was too late. A mad panic, carefully fomented by the grievance mongers had seized the Bengal army and spread like wildfire. The

<sup>1</sup> Local outbreaks had occurred in 1764 1816 1824 and 1844

Brahman and high caste sepoys,<sup>1</sup> suspecting that the British were adopting a method of forcible conversion often practised by Muslim tyrants, refused to touch the cartridges. The situation was made worse by a long established privilege enjoyed by British officers in the Company's army. In peacetime the most intelligent and efficient spent the greater part of their career in more lucrative civil appointments, their regiments remaining in charge of junior subalterns and incapable veterans. India had also been almost denuded of British troops by foolish expeditions to Persia and China. Neither Dalhousie nor the advisers of the new Governor General had scented the coming trouble.

The crisis came in May 1857, after outbreaks at Dum Dum and Barrackpore, near Calcutta had been suppressed. The native regiments at Meerut, the principal military station in Northern India, mutinied, then, after burning the station and killing every European within reach, they made off to Delhi. Within a short time the talukdars of Oudh and their retainers, incited by the Bēgam,<sup>2</sup> and the Rohillas led by the Nawāb of Bareilly, were up in arms. Most of the native regiments in the north west provinces and in Bengal followed the example of Meerut, either concentrating at the three chief centres of the mutiny—Delhi, Cawnpore and Lucknow—or attacking isolated British garrisons in other places.

The qualities which had established British dominion in India stood the crucial test. There was no unity of purpose in the rebels. Neither the princes nor the people of India were deeply moved by the appeals made to blind hatred and savage passions. The Bombay and Madras armies stood firm. Except in Oudh, the chief recruiting ground of the Bengal army, the grievance mongers had no solid ground to stand on. The Punjab, already attached to its new Aryan rulers, was a tower of strength for the British Raj. John Lawrence and

<sup>1</sup> In January 1856 there were in the native infantry of the Bengal army 24 840 Brahmans, 27 993 classed as Rajputs, 13 920 of lower castes, 12 416 Muhammadans and 1076 Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> Local outbreaks had occurred in 1764, 1816 &c.

his colleagues without delay collected all the British troops available. Many Sikhs and Pathans responded to their call. A month after the Meerut outbreak 30,000 mutineers in Delhi, who had proclaimed the restoration of the Mogul empire, were astonished to see a miniature British army of 3000 or 4000 men entrenched on the ridge beyond the walls.

Meanwhile Lord Canning had intercepted British troops on their way to China, and new armies began to pour into India through the seaports—too late to save the tiny garrison at Cawnpore, which, through General Wheeler's folly, had surrendered to the Nānā Sahib (June 27), under promise of safe-conduct to Allahabad. The cowardly miscreant, who had proclaimed himself Pēshwā of Mahārāshtra, shot down the men on the river side, and, two days before the relief column under Havelock reached Cawnpore, butchered pitilessly 200 women and children committed to his care (July 15).

On September 14 the assault of Delhi by 8000 men led by Sir John Nicholson began. The British commander fell, but after six days' hard street fighting the city was won. Bahādur Shah, the last of the Pādshāhs, was arrested soon after, and ended his days in exile at Rangoon. On September 26 Lucknow was relieved for the first time. Here a garrison of about 1000 British, with 700 sepoy pensioners and Sikhs hastily collected by Sir Henry Lawrence, who fell during the siege, had held the Residency for 87 days against more than ten times their number and much more powerful artillery. The relief force was in its turn besieged, until in November 1857 the British Commander in Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, effected the second relief and withdrawal of the garrison. About five months before this the Mutiny had spread to Marāthā territory. A part of Sindia's and Holkar's troops, roused by the fury of the young Rānī of Jhānsī and of Tantrā Topi, the Nānā Sahib's Marāthā general, broke loose and joined the rebels. On the other hand, Sir Jung Bahādur, the ruler of Nepāl, furnished 10,000 Gūrkhās to reinforce the British army. Sir Salar Jung kept order in the Nizām's terri-

tory Sindia and Holkar, though unable to suppress the insubordination of their armies, refused to make common cause with treacherous and bloodthirsty fanatics

By the end of 1857 the full strength of the British Rāj was organised and the worst of the storm had passed, but an arduous campaign in Central India and Bundelkhand, conducted by Sir Hugh Rose lasted through the next hot season, until the Rānī was killed fighting at the head of her troops (June 1858) Tantia Topi became a fugitive, he was subsequently arrested and hanged for complicity in the Cawnpore massacre Lucknow was retaken in March of the same year, and the rebels were driven out of Oudh and Rohilkhand into the jungles of the Nepāl Terāi The Nānā Sahib disappeared, and his fate is unknown

The Mutiny brought the administration of the East India Company to an end<sup>1</sup> By an Act of Parliament passed in August 1858 the government of India was transferred directly to the Crown the powers of the Board of Control and its Secret Committee being taken over by a Cabinet Minister, the Secretary of State for India, assisted by a Council of fifteen members The Queen's Proclamation issued through Lord Canning as the first Viceroy of India, November 1, 1858, confirmed the dignities and rights of Princes of India, renewed existing treaties and solemnly re-affirmed the principles of government laid down in the Charter Act of 1833 Lord Canning who had shown the highest qualities of a statesman when the storm was at its height, refused to be moved by clamours for indiscriminate vengeance when it was over He took the earliest opportunity to disavow Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse and proceeded to the work of pacification and reconstruction in the just and humane spirit of the Proclamation

The universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were started in 1857 amid the turmoil and excitement of the Mutiny Important administrative measures filled the last three years of Lord Canning's term of office Dalhousie had been very

<sup>1</sup> It was not finally dissolved until January 1874

*Hindustan**Southern and Western India*

- 1817 *Pindari War*
- 1817-18 *Third Marāthā War end of the Pēshwās*
- 1818 First vernacular news  
paper: first cotton  
mills in India
- 1820-27 Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of  
Madras
- 1823-28 LORD AMHERST, GOVERNOR GENERAL
- 1824-26 *First Burmese War*
- 1824 Sepoy mutiny at Bar  
rackpore
- 1826 Fall of Bharatpur
1827. First English Univer  
sity (Serampore)
- 1828 35 LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK, GOVERNOR GENERAL
- 1829 Sati prohibited
- 1829-37 Campaign against Thugs
- 1833 CHARTER ACT
- 1835 Education Resolution.
- 1836-42 LORD AUCKLAND, GOVERNOR GENERAL.
- 1839 Road making com  
menced
- 1839-42 *First Afghan War*
- 1842-44 LORD ELLENBOROUGH, GOVERNOR GENERAL
- 1843 Sind annexed Gwa  
lor expedition.
- 1844-48 LORD HARDINGE I, GOVERNOR GENERAL.
- 1845-46 *First Sikh War*
- 1848-56 LORD DALHOUSIE, GOVERNOR GENERAL.
- 1848-49 *Second Sikh War* Pun  
jab annexed
- 1849 Sātārā annexed
- 1852 *Second Burmese War Pegu annexed*
- 1853 CHARTER ACT
- 1853 Nagpur annexed
1854. Sir Charles Wood's Education despatch
- 1854 Oudh annexed
- 1856-62 LORD CANNING, GOVERNOR GENERAL.
- 1856-57 *Persian War*
- 1856-60 *Chinese War*
- 1857 Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay founded
- 1857-58 The Great Mutiny
- 1858 End of East India Company's rule  
The Queen's Proclamation



## CHRONOLOGY, 1860-1923

- 1860 Indian Penal Code enacted
- 1861 Indian Councils Act
- 1862-63 LORD ELGIN I, VICEROY
- 1863 Dost Muhammad, Amīr of Afghanistan, d
- 1864-69 SIR JOHN (LORD) LAWRENCE, VICEROY.
- 1865-67 Orissa famine
- 1868 Shēr Ali, Amīr of Afghanistan
- 1869-72 LORD MAYO, VICEROY
- 1869 Opening of the Suez Canal
- 1872 Murder of Lord Mayo
- 1872-76 LORD NORTHBROOK, VICEROY
- 1873-74 Bihar famine
- 1875-76 Prince of Wales visits India
- 1876-80 LORD LYTTON, VICEROY
- 1876 Royal Titles Act, Quetta occupied
- 1876-78 Famine in Deccan and S India
- 1877 Delhi Durbar, Proclamation of the Queen Empress
- 1878-80 Second Afghan War
- 1879-80 Third Afghan War, Abdur Rahman, Amīr
- 1880-84 LORD RIFON, VICEROY
- 1880 Maiwand disaster
- 1881 General Roberts relieves Kandahār, First Census of India
- 1882 Local Government Act
- 1883-4 Ilbert Bill controversy
- 1884-88 LORD DUFFERIN, VICEROY
- 1885 Indian National Congress founded, Third Burmese War, Upper Burma annexed
- 1888-94 LORD LANSDOWNE, VICEROY
- 1893 Mints closed to free coinage of silver
- 1894-99 LORD ELGIN II, VICEROY
- 1895 Chitral expedition
- 1896 Outbreak of plague
- 1896-97 Famine
- 1897-98 Afridi rising
- 1899-1905 LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON, VICEROY
- 1900 Famine, Land Alienation Act
- 1901 VICTORIA, QUEEN EMPRESS, d  
EDWARD VII, KING EMPEROR, acc  
Abdur Rahman, Amīr, d, Habibullah acc, N W Frontier Province created
- 1903-4 Tibetan expedition
- 1904 Universities Act